The Washington Monthly

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EVAN THOMAS ON THE WORST OF ROBERT KENNEDY & ANTHONY DOLAN ON THE BEST OF ROBERT KENNEDY

embrandt's "Christ Expelling the Merchants from the Temple"

why we need a religious left

by amy waldman

what's un-christian about the christian right

by jonathan rowe

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Letters

Smokes and Violence

Yes, I'm a smoker. As such, I have a much different perspective than the conventional anti-smokers and the holier-than-thou former smokers. I'm also a social drinker. In his well-written article ("Why You Can Hate Drugs and Still Want to Legalize Them," October 1995), Joshua Wolf Shenk makes many valid points, which clearly indicate that U.S. policies, although well-intentioned, are continually leading us in the wrong direction, and a dangerously counterproductive one at that.

My primary disagreement stems from these two points:

(1) "It is high time to begin a massive campaign of negative advertising against both cigarettes and alcohol."

(2) "At the same time, the government could clamp down on the alcohol and cigarette behemoths, and make sure that such they never get their hands on now-illegal drugs by controlling distribution through package stores...."

Seems as if he's almost ready to jump into bed with some temperance-driven members of the "Christian Right" (which is neither). Lumping cigarettes and alcohol with heroin and cocaine is somewhat unrealistic; in fact it's damn unrealistic. When did Shenk see someone commit murder to obtain a cigarette or a cool beer? Apples to apples and oranges to oranges.

William Bradshaw
Oakland, CA

Joshua Wolf Shenk replies: If all nicotine products were banned tomorrow and prices went through the roof, there is little doubt that some addicts would steal to get a fix—and some of those crimes would end in violence.

Shalala's High

I hope you sent a copy of Joshua Wolf Shenk's article to Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala. The Secretary apparently is addicted to the cult classic "Reefer Madness," or so it would seem from my reading of her recent *Wall Street Journal* article attacking the legalization of marijuana.

William M. Burke
San Francisco, CA

More on Wealth Inequality

Paul Krugman rightly pointed out the misconceptions which flow from concentrating on income changes among quintiles in recent years. The real scandal involves the upper one percent—both in income and wealth.

Krugman could have made a much stronger case had he brought these facts to readers' attention:

The top one percent own as much wealth as the lower 90 percent of U.S. households (Federal Reserve Board, 1992). Krugman notes that in the past generation the top one percent has doubled its after-tax income. Actually, this occurred during the 1980s alone. The situation has worsened in the 1990s. National net worth has risen about $6.5 trillion since 1983 and almost $4 trillion of this has gone to the top one-half of one percent (*Time*, Jan. 30, 1995). Whereas top level CEOs made about 40 times as much as their average employee in 1972, that has risen to about 140 times as much today. Finally, the gap between the rich and the rest of us is wider after all taxes (federal, state, and local) have been paid.

That Republicans are seeking to cut taxes for the wealthy in light of the above has to be the most obscene political spectacle of our times. Historians will surely take note.

Reo M. Christenson
Oxford, OH

Loan Rangers

Jonathan Cohn's discussion of student loan repayments ("Student Loans: The Wrong Cuts," October) is flatly wrong to say that "the bottom line is that pay-as-you-can loans simply aren't feasible without direct lending." A simpler system could retain the current fixed-repayment schedule, allowing decelerated paybacks only when an applicant submits prior-year income tax returns verifying low income. Payback rates could then be cut by, say, 50 percent, for two years. Allowing only one rate of loan reduction would vastly simplify repayment paperwork; there's no need to make payroll deductions for such a system to work.

Using a simplified pay-as-you-can system would also allow total repayments to vary as a function of career incomes. For example, a graduate going to Wall Street and pulling down $200,000 eight years after graduation could be required to pay back 120 percent of the loan amount, while a graduate going into public interest law pulling down $20,000 could be required to pay back only 80 percent of the loan amount. This would reduce the problem that such low-paying careers are unfeasible for those with sizeable student loans. This system also wouldn't require a dime of new government spending.

Thomas O'Brien
Charlottesville, VA

Jonathan Cohn replies: In theory, O'Brien is right: the private sector could offer pay-as-you-can loans. The problem, as explained in the article, is

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that the private lenders won't do it on their own. Income-contingent payback isn't as profitable as regular payback plans, and it creates added administrative hassles. With the government in the loan business, on the other hand, offering income-contingent payback options, private lenders are doing the same just to stay competitive. The scheme O'Brien outlines isn't really income-contingent so much as income-sensitive. The 50 percent discount and other steps he proposes still would cost some students more than pay-as-you-can loans under the Clinton program. It's not a bad proxy, mind you, but it's not perfect either.

One last point: It remains to be seen whether private lenders could effectively administer income-contingent loans anyway. As Steven Waldman writes in The Bill, *many experts who have studied the scheme have determined that unless the IRS handles actual collections—something it does not do even under the Clinton plan—the system is likely to fail.*

The Numbers Game

Daniel Franklin's September article, "Act Now—There's Still Time to Stop the Revolution," said that "half of the benefits of the GOP tax cut will go to families earning more than $100,000, while only 5 percent will go to those with incomes less than $30,000."

I used Franklin's figures in a letter to my congressman, Charlie Norwood, in which I asked how Rep. Norwood could condone a tax cut for the wealthy when one of his campaign pledges had been to balance the budget. Rep. Norwood replied that "Frankly, the numbers cited in *The Washington Monthly* are simply wrong and such talk threatens to derail efforts to provide much needed tax relief to the people who need it most."

The tax-cut bill, he said, "directed at the working and middle classes" that "75%" of the $500-per-child tax credit "will go to the lower and middle classes" and that it provides "tax credits for adults to take care of their elderly parents. Despite the rhetoric, this tax cut goes to everyone."

Could you explain the differences between the numbers in Franklin's article and Rep. Norwood's response?
Richard Zimdars
Athens, GA

The editors reply: Franklin's numbers come from the tax cut as a whole, which include not just a child credit but a reduction in the capital gains rate and the expansion of tax-free Individual Retirement Accounts (which, under the House plan, would be available to all, with no income limit), among other giveaways to the wealthy. In fact, 46 percent (48 percent in the Senate plan) of tax cuts taken as a whole will go to those earning $100,000 or more. Those earning under $30,000 would get 1 percent of the benefits. And the working poor earning less than $10,000 would see their taxes increase, due to a reduction in the Earned Income Tax Credit. The source for these numbers, which are not in dispute, is the Treasury Department's Office of Tax Policy Analysis.

Correction

An October article ("The Not So Merry Wives of Washington") reported that Judy Fazio, a lobbyist with Arter & Hadden, is listed in *Washington Representatives* as the wife of Congressman Vic Fazio. Judy Fazio is listed that way in the 1994 issue of *Washington Representatives*; at the time she was employed by the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee as finance director. When Ms. Fazio entered the private sector in 1995 as a consultant with Arter & Hadden, the reference to her marital status was removed from the 1995 *Washington Representatives*. We apologize for any implication that Ms. Fazio has attempted to capitalize on her marital status since her employment with Arter & Hadden.

The Washington Monthly

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Subscription rates: U.S. and possessions: one year, $39.50; two years, $74; three years, $105. For Canadian and foreign subscriptions, add $7 for surface delivery; air mail delivery add $32. Back issues, $5.00. Send correspondence concerning subscriptions, undelivered copies, and changes of address to Box 587, Mount Morris IL, 61054. For change of address, please provide six weeks' notice and include old address label. Send subscription complaints to Charles Peters, *The Washington Monthly*, 1611 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009. *The Washington Monthly* is indexed in the Book Review Index, Political Science Abstracts, Public Affairs Information Service, the Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, the Social Science Index, and Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory and may be obtained on microfilm from University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. For reprint rights for all or part of an article call David Linker at (202) 462-0128. Published monthly except combined January/February and July/August issues by The Washington Monthly Company, 1611 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20009 (202) 462-0128. Printed in U.S.A.

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ISSN 0043-0633. Postmaster: Send change of address to *The Washington Monthly*, Box 587, Mount Morris IL, 61054. Second class postage paid at Mechanicsburg, PA. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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Tilting at Windmills

Have you heard about "Murder One"—what *TV Guide* calls the "best new show of the year"? Here's the premise: Lawyers lie and cheat to get clients acquitted. It reminds me of a recent *New Yorker* cartoon, in which the guy on the bottom bunk of a prison cell says to the guy on the top bunk: "I had a pretty sleazy lawyer, but evidently not sleazy enough."...

Those of us who thought NAFTA was a nifty idea have had to endure a stream of news that suggests otherwise, beginning with the devaluation of the Mexican peso. The latest is the announcement from Fruit of the Loom that, because of lower-priced competition from abroad, it is closing six domestic plants and cutting back operations at two others, laying off about 3,200 workers and accelerating what *The New York Times* calls "the company's drive to move a higher percentage of its operations to cheaper plants abroad."...

We have just heard news that is heart-breaking confirmation of the point made by our October article, "The Not So Merry Wives of Washington." Clay McPherson, who was one of the wives we said had dropped off Washington's radar screen after her divorce from the prominent lawyer Harry McPherson, died this summer while our article was in preparation. But none of the people we talked to, those who were her friends when she was married, knew she was dead....

As you probably know, state governments have been raising speed limits in the last few years. The result: Traffic deaths, which had been dropping for 20 years, started rising in 1993 and rose again in 1994. Despite this evidence, Congress has decided to lift the federal speed limit, leaving the matter entirely in the hands of the states....

Even though the Clintons' health bill failed to pass, one major goal of the reformers is being attained. Since discussion of the various factors contributing to escalating health-care costs began during the 1992 campaign, the percentage of medical school graduates who intend to go into family practice instead of specializing has almost doubled, rising steadily from a low of 14.6 percent to the present figure of 27.6 percent. Since specialists are more expensive than family doctors and since they are much more likely to order costly tests and procedures, this could ultimately be very good news for the nation's health-care bill....

Fifteen years ago, Congress gave authority over regulating and disposing of radioactive waste to the states. Here is an experiment in devolution that began long enough ago to see how well it really works. What have the states done with the authority that Congress gave them?

"In that time, we have spent over $300 million nationwide in disposal planning money and have yet to turn a single shovel of dirt," Michael Munger, a political scientist at the University of North Carolina, recently told *The New York Times*. "It's been great for the lawyers, consultants, and geologists, but that's about all."...

The women's movement has, of course, provided much needed reform, but occasionally its adherents get a bit carried away. Consider the Russian woman who made a speech on the Trans-Siberian train to the Beijing conference in which she declared, "If any men try to bother you, you must strangle them."

Another example comes from Connie Fletcher, the author of a book about women cops. When asked if recent evidence of corruption by female officers was a setback for the movement, she replied: "Some women said it might be a good sign that women are being accepted if they're allowed to be part of the corruption."...

The pilot who was at the controls of the American Eagle turboplane that crashed at Raleigh-Durham misinterpreted an engine light on the instrument panel, wrongly concluding that an engine had failed. He didn't

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check to make sure he was right, as he was supposed to, and he failed to take the steps needed to land a plane with one engine.

This behavior should not have come as a surprise. The pilot had previously been forced to resign by Comair, another commuter airline, because of poor performance. But American Eagle had not asked Comair about his safety record. Even if American Eagle had asked, Comair's policy was not to tell. The reason is that, according to *The New York Times*, "Few airlines will tell another about a former employee's performance for fear of being sued by the applicant if the information is used to deny the person a job."

Shouldn't airlines be required to find out—and to disclose to other airlines—the flying history of each applicant for a pilot's job? That's what the National Transportation Safety Board has recommended. But the FAA and the pilot's union have objected because they fear that the performance information might violate pilots' privacy rights. Why on earth should information bearing on the pilot's ability to safeguard the lives of passengers be regarded as private?...

Before tobacco giant RJR Nabisco purchased the *Weekly Reader*, which now reaches more than 8 million school children, 62 percent of its tobacco articles were anti-smoking. After the purchase, the figure dropped to 24 percent, according to a study by Stanton Glantz, a professor of medicine at the University of California.

Comparing *Weekly Reader* articles after the purchase with those from *Scholastic News*, a similar publication which is not owned by a tobacco company, the study found that nine *Weekly Reader* articles gave the tobacco industry the last word while none of the *Scholastic News* articles did. Joe Camel, the RJR mascot, was presented more favorably in *Weekly Reader,* which was also less likely to mention the effects of smoking likely to turn off kids such as yellow teeth, bad breath, and smelly clothes. For more on the tobacco industry's concern for the nation's youth see the Memo of the Month (on page 32)....

In the past 20 years, not one television station has lost its license for failing to act "in the public interest, necessity, and convenience" as the law requires. This suggests that FCC Chairman Reed Hundt is on the right track in proposing to get tougher about enforcing the public interest provision. We have an idea for him to consider. Why not have every station agree to provide a reasonable amount of free time to political candidates in return for the candidates' agreeing to limits in overall campaign spending? Since half the money that goes into politics is used for television time and production costs, this would greatly reduce the corrupting influence of the present campaign-finance system. Certainly it's time for the public to get something in return for the licenses to mint money we now grant television stations....

Did you read about Al D'Amato's poker games in his Senate office? Many of his fellow players were lobbyists. One participant told The New York Times that D'Amato "appeared to do well" in the games. Although we do not allege that this was the reason for the Senator's success, losing in poker games is a classic way that lobbyists use to slip money to accommodating politicians. The mayor of an important eastern city, for example, is infamous for the unusual streak of good luck he has enjoyed at the poker table, playing with contractors and others who have subsequently been the beneficiaries of official actions taken by the mayor. Curiously enough, a number of the lobbyists who played poker with D'Amato were thereafter similarly blessed by his diligent advocacy of their legislative causes....

Among the items in the budget reconciliation bill that do not fit the reputation for frugality that Republicans like to cultivate are appropriations for the Seawolf submarine and the B-2 bomber.

John Kasich has jokingly asked, "What is the difference between the B-2 and Dracula?" and answered, "Even if you put a stake through the heart of the B-2, it won't die." But his fellow Republicans, including Majority Leader Dick Armey and Majority Whip Tom DeLay, didn't even attempt to use the stake. Instead, they are wasting more of the taxpayers' money on the B-2 and the Seawolf, both of which were designed for wars with the Soviet Union, which just happens to no longer exist.

The GOP's penchant for welfare for private business continues. Subsidies for the maritime industry and protection of the sugar industry are alive and well in the latest legislation. Similar solicitude for the worker is not evident. In fact, the Republicans are threatening to take away the health benefits of retired coal miners. Of course, companies like LTV, the North American Coal Corporation, the Berwind

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Corporation, and the A.T. Massey Coal Company will save millions of dollars.

But the one you have to love the most is the Republican effort to get tough on the gold and silver mining companies. If they buy federal land, they're going to have to pay fair market value. That sounds right, doesn't it? Or are you a little bit suspicious? You should be. There's a provision in the bill saying that fair market value shall be determined "without regard to the mineral deposits in the land."

This, says Democratic Congressman George Miller, is like "selling Fort Knox for the value of its roof."...

A number of people who have served as *The Washington Post*'s ombudsman over the years have proved to be toothless critics. This does not appear to be the case with the latest incumbent, Geneva Overholser, who recently pointed out some unusual editorial decisions. The *Post*'s story about a corporate move by the paper's parent company that was good news for Maryland but bad news for the District of Columbia ran in the paper's Maryland edition but not in the District edition. She also revealed that the *Post* had run an article bemoaning the high newsprint costs that it was paying without mentioning that "the company's affiliated newsprint mills ... are benefiting from higher newsprint prices."...

Nicholas Leeson has told David Frost why his bosses at Barings kept sending him money: They wanted to believe that he would win his bets on currency futures and options. They ignored evidence that might have inspired suspicions in minds less determined to see the sunny side. When presented by Leeson with a fake fax that was supposed to be from a reliable securities trading firm, his superiors failed to notice the words "from Nick and Lisa" at the top, according to Barry Hillenbrand at *Time*.

Sometimes superiors are so

determined to hear good news that they go to great lengths to avoid being confronted with the bad. When Thiokol engineers called NASA the night before the tragic Challenger launch to warn of the O-Ring problem, they were instructed: Don't tell us that—think it over and tell us something else, or we might cancel your contract.

Why did the official react that way? Because President Reagan was scheduled to make his State of the Union speech the next night and was planning to talk about the first teacher up there in space. Obviously, NASA was less likely to be mentioned if the morning launch had been postponed....

Not many people know that story. Yet it is an important piece of history because it helps us understand why the system fails. We not only need to teach a lot more history—I'm sure you've read about the dismal ignorance revealed by the recent national history test of primary and secondary school students—but we need to do a much better job of concentrating on history that has lessons for the present. Some government agencies have gone through periods of both high and low performance—the U.S. Postal Service and the Tennessee Valley Authority were great in the 1930s and pretty bad in the 1970s, for example. Why? Presidents, even the same president, have performed ineptly and brilliantly. Consider the contrast between John Kennedy's handling of the Bay of Pigs and of the Cuban Missile Crisis. The history that explains the differences in the two cases is the kind of history we need the most. Kennedy himself was learning from history when he applied the lessons of the Bay of Pigs to avoid a similar misadventure during the missile crisis....

In this celebrity-crazed era, there are far too many people who are more famous than they deserve to be. But, believe it or not, there are some who are less well-known than they should be. One is my old boss, Sargent Shriver.

Shriver, who just celebrated his 80th birthday, was the first head of the Peace Corps. Although he later went on to perform many

Roman Genn

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other assignments with distinction, it was at the Peace Corps that he made the administrative innovations that should earn him canonization as the man who showed us how to make government work. In the present time, when many despair whether government can do anything right, what he did to make the Peace Corps a success could not be more relevant.

What he understood was, first, the importance of selecting the right people to staff the organization and of getting rid of those who didn't work out, and second, the importance of knowing better than anyone else what was happening where the rubber met the road for his agency, which in the case of the Peace Corps was what the volunteers were doing in the field. It seems so simple. Doesn't every administrator understand these things?

If you assume they all know what is going on in their agencies, please ponder the cases of the last three directors of the CIA who keep assuring us that they did not know. As for selecting the people who would work under him, I have never known a leader who gave anywhere near as much care to the task. Shriver must have spent at least a fourth of his time talking to potential staff members, personally interviewing almost all of the men and women who ran our programs in more than 50 countries. All of us on the Washington staff knew our standing with the director would be greatly enhanced if we recommended someone with the right stuff. And we had a special talent-search office to reach out to those who might have it. To head the office, Sarge selected Jay Rockefeller, whose phone calls, as Sarge rightly suspected, would always get returned.

As for recruiting the volunteers, the most important people of all, Sarge assigned that job to Bill Moyers, who was generally considered his ablest subordinate. Bill's lieutenants launched a series of recruiting blitzes that involved almost everyone on the Washington staff. Groups of four or five of us were sent to college campuses around the country where we hunted from dawn to dusk—and several hours thereafter—for the best seniors and graduate students, who were then subjected to our sales pitch, which, since we were all true believers, often proved both relentless and persuasive.

And just as Shriver did not hesitate to fire staff members who didn't work out, as many as a third of a volunteer group would be dropped from a training program if it appeared they could not do the job overseas.

Other government administrators do not have the power over personnel that Shriver exercised. Shouldn't we give it to them if we are truly serious about making government work?

The argument against is that it will be used to load agencies with incompetent political appointees. But this is not what happened at the Peace Corps. Having worked in the 1960 Kennedy campaign helped some of us get a foot in the door—and there is nothing wrong, indeed much that is right, about that—but the jobs given to us, to everyone else on the staff, and to the volunteers, were based entirely on ability. Shriver believed that the best politics was to create an agency that the country would be proud of. Fortunately, he had a president who agreed with him. The lesson is to ask presidential candidates if they feel the same way, elect only those who say they do, and vote out of office those who turn out to have been lying. Isn't that what democracy means?

Shriver's other great contribution to the art of public administration was a mechanism he devised to make sure that he knew what was going on. He was aware of the tendency in any organization to minimize or eliminate entirely the bad news in the information that comes from the soldiers at the front. So he arranged for a group of lawyers and reporters, people who had some experience in gathering and evaluating facts, to go out and interview the Peace Corps' equivalent of soldiers at the front: the volunteers in our projects around the world and the people with whom they were working. Reports of these interviews went directly to Shriver, with emphasis on the bad news that might otherwise have difficulty making its way up the bureaucratic ladder. The result was that Shriver was able to find out about our problems and deal with them before they became public scandals.

You may ask why, if we had all those wonderful people on the staff, Shriver couldn't rely on the regular chain of command to tell him unhappy truths. The answer is that the best subordinates often do not tell the boss about a problem, not because they want to cover up, but because they feel they should solve it without bothering the boss. Unfortunately, sometimes they fail, and the boss gets an unpleasant surprise when the problem blows up in his face.

Shriver displayed another quality at the Peace Corps that I regard as essential in a leader. It was the kind of infectious enthusiasm that was so evident in both Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt, a joy in doing his job that, no matter how hard we were working, the rest of us couldn't help but share....

—Charles Peters

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An Endangered Species

Senator John Chafee is fighting an uphill battle to moderate the Republican "revolution"

BY JOSHUA WOLF SHENK

It is not every day that one sees a United States senator atop a dozen-foot tall herbivorous mammal. But there it is, hanging outside John Chafee's office, a black-and-white photo of the senator as a younger man, wearing a broad smile, astride a mammoth gray elephant.

"Pretty good, wasn't it?" Chafee asks in a thick Rhode Island accent. He laughs. "I'm not sure I qualify as an expert elephant rider, but I hung on then."

He's still hanging on. A moderate Republican in an era of conservative politicians, Chafee is known among party leaders as a "problem senator." Though he voted to approve the budget, it was only after grumbling loudly about tax cuts. "Bad policy and bad politics," he calls them. Chafee signed onto Medicaid reform only after pushing for—and winning, with the help of other moderates—revisions in the plan to turn the entire program over to the states. He voted for a reduction in student aid but only after reducing the cuts by one-half. "I am an enthusiastic supporter" of the GOP program, he tells me. But he has to tell me. Unlike with other Republicans, asking, "What does Chafee think of the GOP program?" is not a stupid question.

The "hollowing of the center," as Brookings scholar Robert Reischauer describes current trends, is perhaps the central story of modern politics—particularly among Republicans. Due to changes in the nominating process, redistricting, and the impact of a few dynamic personalities, the Republican party is now controlled by a faction of extreme conservatives. The territory held by truly centrist legislators, those willing and interested in building bridges across party lines, is shrinking. Those who remain feel the sand shifting beneath their feet.

John Chafee stands in that center and is for that reason, among others, an intriguing figure: He's a hero of sorts to liberals who might consider him a dubious ally. He's a heretic to party leaders who nevertheless need his support. He is both an inspiring reminder of the tradition of moderation, consensus, and principle and a compelling example of how even the most strong-willed of moderates have been brought on board—or simply squelched—by the radical right. If Republicans continue to shove aside the mainstream bloc of their own party, the country will suffer—and, in the end, so might the GOP itself.

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Chafee won his Senate seat in 1976, strangely enough, buttressed by voters' memory of an election he had lost. Running for his fourth two-year term as governor in 1968, Chafee told voters he would need to raise the state income tax. His opponent, Democrat Frank Licht, seized the issue, promised to avoid a tax and won the election. After he took office, Licht raised the tax anyway.

Rhode Islanders later rewarded Chafee's honesty. "I remember hearing people say in '76, 'Oh well, Chafee told the truth back then, and that's why I'm voting for him'," says John Mulligan, Washington bureau chief of the *Providence Journal-Bulletin*. "He has this image of Yankee rectitude, and it's held him in pretty good stead."

That rectitude comes largely from Chafee's background. His father, a tool manufacturer and the descendant of a Rhode Island family that stretches to the 17th century, placed such great emphasis on manners that he once chastised his son for tooting his car horn at a farmhand on a country road. And Chafee's children remember their grandfather paying them 50 cents for every aphorism they'd memorize. Lincoln Chafee, the senator's son and the mayor of his father's home town of Warwick, Rhode Island, rattles them off: "Eat it up, wear it out, make it do, do without," he says. "Make haste, not waste."

John Chafee says he had few thoughts of entering politics while growing up. His great-grandfather and great uncle had both served as governor, he says, but "in those days, you were governor of Rhode Island for a year so everybody and his brother had served as governor. I never met a politician before I went to college."

At Yale, Chafee brushed against prominent politicians, as well as future statesmen. Along with George Bush, he was "tapped" into the prestigious secret society Skull and Bones. Also like Bush, he fought in World War II, with the Marines in the historic landing at Guadalcanal. When he returned, he finished at Yale, then Harvard Law School, and practiced law in Providence before heading off to Korea, where he commanded a rifle company.

"You learned from men like Chafee," writes James Brady, a lieutenant under the captain's command in Korea, in his memoir *The Coldest War*, "a Yalie with a law degree from Harvard, who came from money, a handsome, patrician man, physically courageous and tireless. From all that could have come arrogance, snobbery. He possessed neither of those traits, he was only calm and vigorous and efficient, usually cheerful, decent and humane, a good man, a fine officer."

It was rare for men of Chafee's generation who weren't professional soldiers to serve double-duty in both World War II and Korea. But Chafee's background pointed him to military service—his father was an ambulance driver for the French Army in World War I—and he did it enthusiastically. The future senator appears personally in only a dozen or so scenes of Brady's book. But he is mentioned constantly: On a mission, Brady concentrated on staying cool, "the way Chafee would have." Brady admires an officer who goes "up and down a hill a dozen times, looking as tireless as Chafee."

Phil Rivers, a longtime Chafee aid, says he always thought the military, with people of all different backgrounds gathered for a common purpose, had a deep effect on the senator's approach to the world. "He was curious about people's lives, constantly asking questions.... He'd see a mother on a street with little kids and ask, 'What books are they reading? My kids always read Nancy Drew. Do they like that? What grades are they in? What do you do?

The Politics of Principle

When Chafee returned from Korea, he remembers finding his state "in shambles." "We were falling behind in everything," he says. "There was high unemployment, and all kinds of problems. The state wasn't moving ahead ... and I said, 'I can straighten this place out.'" Chafee won a seat as state representative in 1956 and his first term as governor in 1962. Two years later, Barry Goldwater's nomination signaled the rise of Republican conservatives—a trend that would lead to Ronald Reagan's presidency and the ascendency of Newt Gingrich.

Unlike those politicians, who came to power by blaming "big government" for the country's problems, Chafee is an enthusiastic public servant. Bruce Selya, a longtime friend and advisor of Chafee's, worked in a law office in the same building with him in the early 1970s. "I cannot tell you," he says, "the number of times he would come from the 26th floor to the 25th floor and sit down across from me and say, 'How could you do

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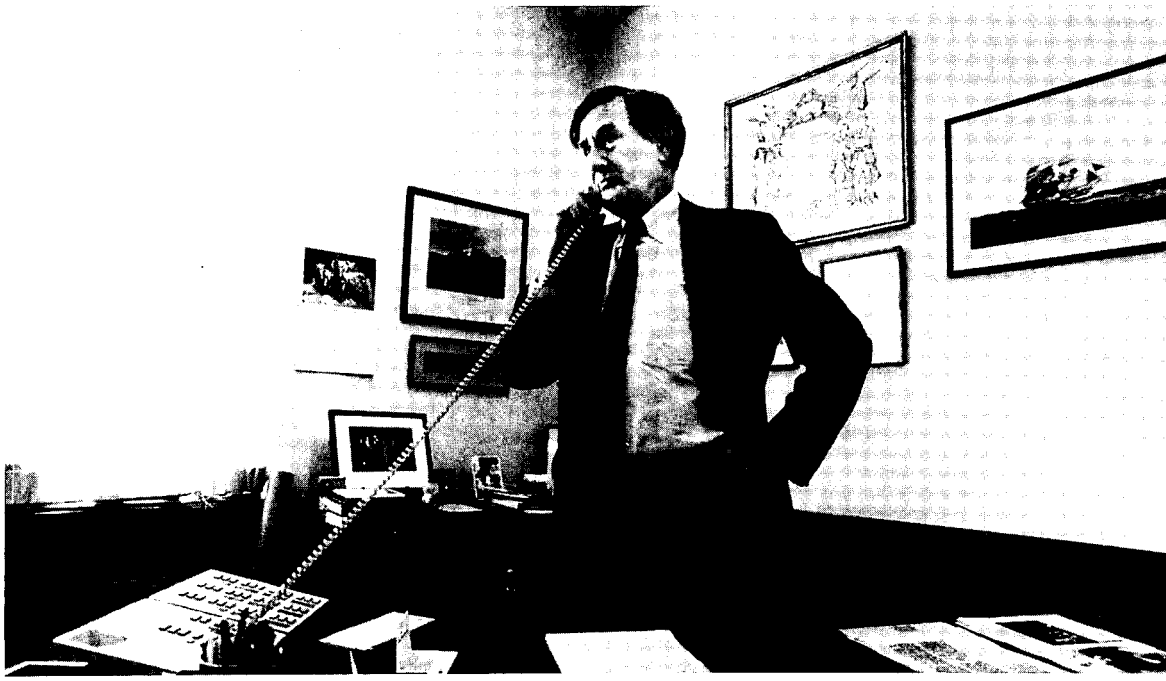

Endangered, but not extinct. John Chafee in his Senate office.

this for a living?' He was just so bored." Chafee was always trying to lure lawyers into his administration, Selya says, "so they could get a feel for public service. He thought they would get hooked—because it happened to him." In an interview, Chafee proudly shows me a 1964 cartoon in a Providence paper. It shows him as a hockey player on skates, slamming pucks into the net, each one representing an appointment he had made as governor. "Looking pretty good," the caption reads.

At times, Chafee's Senate seat has been in doubt. Rhode Island is a mostly Democratic state, and challengers from the left have given him some tough races. Still, Chafee has tended to avoid attack politics, preferring to emphasize his record. He also has kept his distance from a new breed of campaign professionals who don't mind winning an election while leaving deep scars in the electorate.

In one campaign, his advisors thought they had scored a coup by signing up Harry Treleavan, the star GOP media consultant who was given much credit for Nixon's win in 1968. Treleavan flew in to meet with the candidate and his staff at Selya's home. At one point, Selya noticed Chafee had been gone from the meeting for 10 or 20 minutes, and found him in an upstairs bedroom—sitting on the floor playing Go Fish with Selya's five-year-old daughter, Dawn.

"I said, 'John, what the hell are you doing?'" Selya remembers. "And he said, 'I just don't have any patience for that guy. I'm going to run as me. You all do what you have to do, but Dawn and I are having a very nice game here.'"

In Rhode Island, Chafee is known mostly for a simple slogan: "The man you can trust." Although he defies clear ideological categories—supporting abortion rights, a balanced budget, gun control and low taxes—voters in his state know where he stands. Chafee is a rare sort of politician these days. He articulates principles and goals, then seeks to develop a consensus for legislation to best serve that purpose. More common, unfortunately, are politicians who do what's expedient, then find a principle to suit the occasion.

Take the health care debate of 1993 and 1994. For decades, both Bob Dole, then Senate minority leader, and John Chafee pushed to overhaul the country's health care system. As early as 1971, Dole bemoaned the "health care crisis in our nation" from the Senate floor. He gave a similar speech in 1991, again describing a "crisis." Chafee, too, had long fretted over exploding costs and a steadily increasing number of uninsured.

In the spring and summer of 1994, with the

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country closer than ever to major reform, strategist William Kristol began to whisper in Republican ears that they ought not support a bill—*any* bill—lest President Clinton get the credit. A dismayed Chafee urged his colleagues to ignore Kristol. He was trying to build support for a bill he had written with input from moderates of both parties.

On a typically frantic day in May 1994, Chafee was explaining the plan's details—universal coverage by the year 2005, cost control, and other reforms—to a reporter outside the Finance Committee's hearing room when Dole walked by. "Do you support the Chafee plan?" the reporter asked. "Some days," Dole quipped and quickly exited.

Dole was only half joking. While Chafee was trying to make reform happen, Dole and other conservatives simply walked away from the discussion. All of a sudden, Dole decided there was no crisis after all. Chafee's bill—along with the dozen or so others in the House and Senate—was suffocated by gridlock, even though a number of reforms had broad bipartisan support. At the time, there were 30-some million Americans without health insurance. Today, that number is 41 million.

Whatever you think of Chafee's health care plan, the point is that he stayed focused on governing. With his fellow moderates, Chafee understands what "some days" Bob Dole forgets: You can't run the government while running against it.

Indeed, Chafee is the rare Republican who believes that government *can* work, that it can help improve people's lives. This is most clear in his commitment to environmental protection, which stretches back to his Green Acres plan as governor, when he purchased huge swaths of land to set aside for public preserves. In the Senate, he has played a role in most major environmental bills since 1977, including the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Toxic Substances Control Act, and Superfund. Over the years, he has withstood enormous pressure from business interests, whether by pushing a moratorium on the fishing of striped bass in the early eighties, by tightening restrictions on wetland development, or by banning federal subsidies for development of coastal islands.

Although Richard Nixon initiated the modern era of environmental protection, "pro-environment Republican" has become something of an oxymoron. The Reagan Administration went after regulations with a gusto, and Chafee says the new threat to the environment may be the most serious ever. "In the [James] Watt days," he says, "it wasn't so much changing the laws as it was what they were doing by [weakening] regulation. Now they are going straight for the laws"—including the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Clean Air Act, all of which Chafee has vowed to improve where necessary but defend resolutely. While conservatives have tried to cripple the EPA with cuts and riders to its budget that forbid the enforcement of certain rules, Chafee has defended the agency. He negotiated with Budget Committee Chairman Christopher Bond this summer to keep many of the more noxious riders from the House bill off the Senate bill. House moderates, waging similar—and similarly lonely—battles, later won a big victory in striking the budget riders entirely.

Although the EPA battle was one of several important victories, the story of moderates in the House is mostly one of Gingrich's success in keeping them on board. Indeed, the House has become synonymous with a steamroller of hard-right conservatism. But the Senate, traditionally the chamber of sensibility and moderation, has in many ways become an appendage of that "revolution"—going even further, in some areas, in dismantling programs that serve the poor and working class and pushing measures to help the wealthy. While the House's fiscal 1996 budget, for example, calls for $21 billion in cuts from the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), the Senate Finance Committee doubled that figure.

Given the strength of the right wing, the successes of moderate Republicans in the Senate are impressive. In the past few months, they have:

- scaled back EITC cuts by $10 billion;
- removed a plank in the welfare reform package that would have cut off funds to women who had more children;
- stopped a GOP plan to allow corporations to raid their employees' pensions, something that would have put workers' hard-earned retirement money in jeopardy;
- and added $5.9 billion to the budget for student loans and $1.2 billion for teaching hospitals.

They've also vowed to oppose a movement in the House that would forbid charity groups receiving public money to lobby with private funds, while exempting defense contractors and other business interests from these restrictions.

Like the other moderates, Chafee supports the

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goal of a balanced budget. But with their ranks thinning—and with Majority Leader Bob Dole anxious to please the extremists who are essential to his bid for the presidency—moderates have an uphill battle curbing the right wing's excesses. Where Chafee has fought and won, he has shown the good that moderates can do. Where he has been unable—or perhaps unwilling—to block legislation that he disagrees with, he has shown the extent to which "moderate Republican" is fast becoming an oxymoron.

Not only are moderates leaving Congress, but many are declining to run for office in the first place.

On Medicaid, for example, Republicans wanted to turn the whole program over to the states, ending the 30-year-old program's commitment to serve all poor and disabled people in need of health care. From the beginning, Chafee argued that the federal government would be irresponsible to simply write a $500 billion check to the states and abandon all federal control. Party leaders agreed to maintain federal standards for nursing homes, and a guarantee of care for pregnant mothers, children under the age of 12, and disabled people in poverty—an important victory. Although he and other moderates wanted more in the way of federal protections—and though they had the votes to kill the block grant program—Chafee felt he had done as much as he could. (After the provision protecting the disabled was omitted, he even stormed to the floor and insisted it stay in.) The bill passed with his support.

Chafee was also strongly opposed to the $245 billion in tax cuts in this year's budget, and his vote on the Finance Committee, where the Republicans have only an 11 to 9 majority, gave him the power to stop the budget in its tracks. He had strong public support: Polls show that Americans are less interested in a tax cut than a balanced budget and that the tax breaks for the wealthy are a clear political loser. Eliminating the tax cuts—48 percent of which, under the Senate plan, would benefit Americans making more than $100,000 a year—could ease draconian cuts in Medicare, Medicaid, and other worthwhile programs.

Many observers were hoping Chafee would "pull a Hatfield" on tax cuts—after Oregon Republican Senator Mark Hatfield, who broke with his party to defeat the balanced budget amendment. But for his colleagues, the Hatfield example is less a model than a warning. After his vote, he was threatened with the loss of the Appropriations Committee chair, and leadership began to bypass him on important budget decisions. The pressure has been so intense that colleagues say Hatfield is losing his taste for public life, after nearly 30 years in the Senate. "It would be my guess that [Hatfield] won't run again," says Jay Rockefeller, the Democratic senator from West Virginia. "I don't think he likes the Senate much."

It's a lesson Chafee knows well; in the past, he has paid for his independence. In 1990, he lost the chair of the Republican Conference, the number three position in Senate leadership because he hadn't supported President Bush on some key votes. And there have been murmurs that he might be stripped of his chairmanship of the Environment and Public Works Committee. "Chafee has been battered all over the building by his Republican colleagues, trying to get him off of stuff they couldn't get him off of," Rockefeller says.

In the face of this pressure—and insisting that he was acting to further the larger goal of a balanced budget—Chafee voted to send the budget bill out of committee. He also voted against a floor amendment that would have delayed the tax cuts until the year 2002, when a budget surplus is supposed to materialize.

It was a disappointing moment. This was not the first time Chafee has fallen in line with his party's right wing—he voted to confirm Clarence Thomas and fought against Clinton's 1993 budget, wrongly calling it a "job killer." The legislation being pushed through Congress now may be the most important package of changes since the legislation on civil rights, Medicare and Medicaid passed in the sixties. And the principle of moderation has largely disappeared from both chambers. In *The National Journal* recently, Jeff Shear reported a conversation with Mark Hatfield shortly after he returned from a bicameral "budget steering group" established by Gingrich and Dole to coordinate their program. (A committee, it is widely agreed, that Gingrich dominates.) "I didn't hear much talk of compromise," Hatfield said.

With the Republican budget package headed for a certain veto, there is a chance that moderates

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could go even further in improving these bills. If President Clinton were smart, he'd fashion a coalition with them and construct a common sense compromise. Whatever the specific fate of the GOP program the legacy of the 104th Congress is unlikely to change: Conservatives run the show. As Danforth puts it, Republican moderates are "very rare. Dodo bird rare. No, I'd say more like Whooping Crane rare." That is to say, not extinct, but endangered. Moderate Republican senators can be counted on two hands, with fingers to spare: William S. Cohen and Olympia Snowe of Maine, James Jeffords of Vermont, Nancy Kassebaum of Kansas, Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania and, of course, John Chafee. Depending on the issue, Hatfield can sometimes be counted among their ranks, as can recent GOP convert Ben Nighthorse Campbell of Colorado.

But the faction continues to erode. In recent years, David Durenberger, Bob Stafford and John Danforth have left. Bob Packwood's departure, though something to be cheered in many respects, was another blow to moderates. Had he been the chair of the Finance Committee (rather than William Roth)—and had he not vacated a seat that was filled by Phil Gramm—Packwood could have squelched the tax cuts or reduced them significantly. Nancy Kassebaum has sent signals that she, too, will be leaving. Moderate Democrats are vacating the Senate, as well; Sam Nunn and Bill Bradley are in their last year.

Sadly, many moderates are declining to run in the first place. The far right now has a tight grip on the Republican party in states from Oregon to Iowa. Former New Jersey Governor Thomas Kean said recently that he would not pursue Bill Bradley's seat because his party is increasingly dominated by "right-wing radicals."

Dark-haired and vibrant at age 73, Chafee still has five years left in this term. "If there was ever a time he would give up in frustration," Lincoln Chafee says, "I think it would be now.... Some of the issues he does care deeply about, ironically in a Republican Congress, are now under attack. But he's as energetic and enthusiastic as ever." Lincoln says his father, who wrestled in college and as an amateur, has a wrestler's temperament—he's even in the Wrestling Hall of Fame. "He's a determined man," Lincoln says. "He married my mother by determination. His friends were telling him, 'Don't bother.' She was giving him the run-around or whatever. But he wouldn't give up."

Indeed, the senator shows no interest in retiring; he says he still has much left to do, on the environment, health care, and education. But the extent to which the bulk of the Republican program has gone through unscathed—including tax breaks for the wealthy and a dismantling of welfare and Medicaid—shows that the influence of Chafee and his fellow moderates is waning.

That's a loss for the country: Moderates have played a major role in everything from the Civil Rights Act of 1991 to the passage of President Clinton's national service program and student loan reform. The theme that runs through these programs is the idea that government can work to improve the country and the lives of its citizens. "You constantly have to reexamine the role of government," says Senator William S. Cohen. If you find "regulations are too cumbersome, too asphyxiating, we have to trim them back. But do it in a way that does good.... This attitude that government is the enemy of the people is inaccurate." Senators like Cohen, Kassebaum, and Chafee, in other words, push to reform and improve government, as opposed to slamming it with a wrecking ball.

Chafee's voice rises with emotion and disbelief as he speaks of many conservatives' penchant for "assailing everybody who works for government as a 'bureaucrat.' Obviously that's a pejorative term; it's meant to be a demeaning term. We have some great people in government, and I'm darn proud of them."

Ironically, the squelching of moderates may turn out to be a loss for the Republican party. "The far-right," says Mark Rubke, executive director of the Ripon Society, a group of liberal Republicans, "will look at a poll and see environment on the list of American's concerns at number 10 and say, 'We don't have to deal with it.... Let's just give that to the business interests.'" But that's shortsighted, Rubke says. "We are handing this issue to the Democrats. It's so easy to get people worked up and worried [that] iron or whatnot will be flowing into the house."

John Chafee will continue to ride the elephant, prodding it in the right direction where he can. But, judging from the GOP's plummet in opinion polls, if his party continues to push him—and other voices of reason—away, the elephant may find itself out in the cold. □

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It's a Winner-Take-All Market

Why Gerald Levin, Danielle Steel, and Johnnie Cochran make so much more than the rest of us

BY ROBERT H. FRANK AND PHILIP J. COOK

For a parable in modern economics, consider the local opera house. At the turn of the century, Iowa alone had more than 1,500 of them. Thousands of sopranos earned adequate, if modest, livings from their live performances. But now, thanks to modern recordings, the world's best soprano can be literally everywhere at once. And since it costs no more to stamp out compact discs of Kathleen Battle's Mozart arias than her understudy's, most opera fans listen to Battle. Thus Battle earns several million dollars a year while most other sopranos, many of whom are almost as talented, struggle to get by.

In similar fashion, the printing press enabled a handful of the world's best storytellers to replace millions of village raconteurs. The electronic newswire allowed a small number of syndicated columnists to displace a host of local journalists. Only a few thousand boxing fans saw Dempsey defeat Tunney in 1927, but now, thanks to pay-per-view, millions of fans can watch the world's best heavyweights and pay for the privilege.

Kathleen Battle, Stephen King, George Will, Mike Tyson and others like them sell their services in a what we call the "winner-take-all" market. The very best in their fields prosper, while the rest barely get by. To understand the phenomenon—and why it has gone from characterizing a few professions to being a central economic fact—you must look to the so-called information revolution. As communication becomes ever more efficient, and as political borders become less and less important, the potential market for a good or service rapidly expands. The number of fax machines worldwide rose from 300,000 in 1983 to 8 million in 1992. During the same period, the population with access to the Internet grew from 1,000 to over 25 million. International phone calls are cheaper than ever, as is transportation.

In this global village, the top players—those who can deliver the best product—can earn enormous profits. Consider Acme Radials, a hypothetical tire company in Akron, Ohio. If Acme were the best in, say northern Ohio, they were once guaranteed a decent business. But today's sophisticated consumers increasingly purchase their tires from only a handful

Robert H. Frank and Philip J. Cook are authors of The Winner-Take-All Society: How More and More Americans Compete for Fewer and Bigger Prizes, Encouraging Economic Waste, Income Inequality, and an Impoverished Cultural Life *(1995, The Free Press).*

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of the best tire producers worldwide: If Acme is one of the best, it wins and its profits will skyrocket; otherwise, its future will likely be bleak.

This same dynamic is at work for individuals. As the world's hospitals are linked by high-speed data-transmission networks, for example, the world's most gifted neurosurgeons can assist in the diagnosis and treatment of patients thousands of miles away—cutting into the business of other doctors and earning enormous sums of money themselves.

In many ways, this is a disturbing phenomenon. Consider the growing gap between rich and poor—perhaps the most pressing economic problem of our time. Scarcely a week passes in which the national media fail to report new evidence of the growing gap—*The New Yorker*'s article, "Who Killed the Middle Class?" is only one recent example. Between 1980 and 1990, the number of workers earning more than $120,000 (in 1990 dollars) doubled from half a million to one million. The top one percent of U.S. earners have captured more than 40 percent of all economic growth since 1973, while the median wage fell 15 percent in real terms, and the bottom fifth of all earners fared even worse.

Our claim is that the growth of "winner-take-all markets" has played an important role in the expansion of inequality and that these markets also make the economy less productive and stunt growth. Understanding this trend is crucial, so we can adjust fiscal policy accordingly. Winner-take-all markets are strikingly different from traditional textbook markets, such as those in which wheat and work shirts are traded. And—no surprise—the old economic policies that make sense in a textbook world are often singularly ill-suited for a winner-take-all society. Unfortunately, few politicians—in particular, the Republican majority in Congress—understand winner-take-all markets. Their plan for tax cuts would likely do a double-dose of harm: It would exacerbate inequality and diminish economic growth.

The New Markets

A winner-take-all market is one in which reward depends heavily on relative, not absolute, performance. A farmer's pay depends mostly on the absolute amount of wheat he or she produces, and only a little on the amounts produced by other farmers. But a software developer's pay depends largely on his or her performance ranking. In the market for personal income-tax software, for instance, the market reaches quick consensus on which among the hundreds of competing programs is the most comprehensive and user-friendly. Although the best program may be only slightly better than its nearest rival, their developers' incomes may differ a thousand fold.

(It should be pointed out that, by talking of winner-take-all markets, we don't mean that there is literally only one winner in their respective arenas. Indeed, there may be scores or even thousands of highly lucrative positions in any given winner-take-all market. A more accurate term, actually, would be "those-near-the-top-get-a-disproportionate-share" markets.)

The dependence of economic reward on performance ranking is nothing new—in any hierarchy, there's only room for one at the top, whether it be the head of a firm or an elected official. But a number of new winner-take-all markets have evolved in the last several decades. For example, it used to be that a salesperson was limited to a certain geographic area, an office was necessary to store certain documents, and traveling was done by car. Now, salespeople can travel greater distances faster and cheaper. They can interact with customers via fax and computer networks even more easily. And even the office is often no longer necessary; just a computer and a voice mailbox will do. The result is that more talented sellers capture an even larger share of the market, and others have less and less. Barriers that once prevented the top performers from serving broader markets are eroding. In the music industry, the driving force was the arrival of breathtakingly lifelike pre-recorded music. For salespeople, it's the technology of communication and travel. The result is much the same.

Much of the winner-take-all phenomenon is not about new markets but old ones in which the effect has intensified. It used to be that a variety of formal and informal rules traditionally prevented intense competition for talent in certain fields. For example, it was once the almost universal practice in American businesses to promote executives from within, which often enabled companies to retain top executives for less than one-tenth of today's salaries. As recently as 1984, the business community arched its collective eyebrow when Apple hired a new chief executive with a back-

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ground in soft drink marketing.

But that tradition has slowly eroded. Today, business executives jump ship for a better offer as commonly as free agents in professional sports. When RJR Nabisco's Louis Gerstner left to head up IBM, or when Kodak brought in Motorola's George Fisher, no one was surprised. The most dramatic example of the explosion in pay at the top is Michael Eisner, who received $200 million in total compensation in 1993. The ratio between top executives and the average workers in their companies has now grown from 35-to-1 in the early seventies to more than 140-to-1 today.

To be sure, some aspects of the "winner-take-all" market do benefit consumers. If you're sick, you'll appreciate being able to consult with the very best doctor. We should also count as a benefit that the most talented executives are now more likely to manage the most important companies.

It's also the case that the companies that pay outlandish salaries are not necessarily behaving irrationally. Eisner was paid more than $200 million in 1993 not because he duped shareholders, but because he delivered an unprecedented increase in the company's value at a time when the mobility of chief executives has dramatically increased. It's not that this necessarily serves a broader social good, but it does make economic sense.

Yet the lure of the top prizes in winner-take-all markets has also steered many of the country's best and brightest toward career choices that make little sense for them as individuals, and still less sense for the nation as a whole. In increasing numbers, top graduates from top colleges pursue positions in law, finance, consulting, and other overcrowded arenas. They're gunning to be the Johnnie Cochrans or the Michael Eisners of tomorrow, and in the process forsaking careers in engineering, civil service, teaching, and other occupations in which an infusion of additional talent would yield greater benefit to society.

One study estimated, for example, that whereas a doubling of enrollments in engineering would cause the growth rate of GDP to rise by half a percentage point, a doubling of enrollments in law would actually cause a *decline* of three-tenths of a point. Yet the number of new lawyers admitted to the bar each year more than doubled between 1970 and 1990, a period during which the average standardized test scores of new public school teachers fell dramatically.

One might hope that such imbalances would fade as wages are bid up in underserved markets and driven down in overcrowded ones; indeed there have been recent indications of a decline in the number of law school applicants. For two reasons, however, such adjustments are destined to fall short.

The first is an informational problem. An intelligent decision about whether to pit one's own skills against a largely unknown field of adversaries obviously requires a well-informed estimate of the odds of winning. Yet people's assessments about these odds are notoriously inaccurate. Survey evidence shows, for example, that some 80 percent of us think we are better-than-average drivers; and that more than 90 percent of workers consider themselves more productive than their average colleague.

Psychologists call this the "Lake Wobegon Effect," and its importance for present purposes is that it leads people to overestimate their odds of landing a superstar position. Indeed, overconfidence is likely to be especially strong in the realm of career choice because, in addition to the usual motivational biases that support it, there is also the fact that the biggest winners are so conspicuous.

Just as the Michael Jordans of the world are more visible than the thousands of athletes who don't make it, so are high-profile litigators more visible than ambulance chasers. This leads many people to overestimate their chances of "winning" and thus forsake productive occupations.

Why should we care if so many people are lured into winner-take-all fields? Consider the epitome of a winner-take-all economy: gold prospecting. In the initial stages of any site, the presence of additional prospectors may significantly increase the total amount of gold that is found. But as the field gets more crowded, a newcomer won't find any gold that wouldn't have been found anyway by someone else. The total amount of gold introduced into society stays about the same.

Now consider a man who must decide between becoming a prospector or working in a factory for $10,000 a year. Suppose he expects to find $11,000 in gold, and $9,000 of that would have been found even without him. It will still be worth his while to go prospecting, even though his presence in the gold field increases the total amount of gold found by only $2,000. Yet society's total income would have been $8,000 higher had he instead gone to

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work in the factory.

Similarly misleading incentives confront potential contestants in winner-take-all markets. Beyond some point, for example, an increase in the number of aspiring mergers-and-acquisitions lawyers produces much less than a proportional increase in the amount of commissions to be had from such transactions. One law student's good fortune in landing a position in a leading Wall Street firm is thus largely offset by her rival's failure to land that same position.

Certainly, even those lawyers who fail to win the biggest prizes often go on to earn comfortable incomes. But so do many engineers and manufacturers. Highly talented people who end up processing divorce papers and real-estate closings won't starve, but neither do they realize their full potential in terms of producing wealth for the economy.

Clearly, there are forces at work beyond the shift to winner-take-all markets that lead people into positions that are less productive for society. Law is attractive because it pays more even in an average position than, say, teaching. Acting appeals to people who don't necessarily want to be Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Restoring Equality—and Growth

The "winner-take-all" phenomenon clearly plays an important role—and one with serious implications for policymaking. In the midst of burgeoning income inequality and growing national debt, one might expect Congress to consider raising tax rates on the highest earners. Yet many Republicans in Congress are lining up behind Majority Leader Dick Armey's "flat tax." The Armey plan would tax all Americans at the same rate of 17 percent. Had the Armey proposal been in effect in 1993, it would have given Disney's Michael Eisner roughly an additional $50 million to spend.

That such a proposal even receives serious consideration provides striking testimony to the staying power of trickle-down theory—lower taxes on the rich spurs economic growth—which has animated the Republican push for less progressive taxes for almost two decades and which, in recent years, has even captured the attention of some prominent Democrats. Properly qualified, one of the major points of trickle-down theory is a good one: Confiscatory tax rates on a nation's most productive citizens are indeed, as Britain discovered, a blueprint for economic decline. But tax rates on the highest American earners are far from confiscatory, either in absolute or in relative terms. Even with the revisions of 1993, our tax system remains the least progressive of the major industrial nations. Why do executives in Germany and Japan, whose pre-tax incomes are much smaller than those of their American counterparts, continue to work hard, save, and take risks, even though they face significantly higher marginal tax rates?

Now, our growing understanding of the incentive problems created by a winner-take-all society poses an even more decisive challenge to trickle-down theory. Society's highest incomes accrue to the top performers in winner-take-all markets, which, as we have seen, persistently attract too many contestants. To the extent that economic incentives matter at all (and it is the cornerstone of trickle-down theory that they do), higher taxes on top earners would push some people away from the competition for the most glamorous lines of work, and into more productive lines of work.

Thus, a more progressive tax structure may produce not only greater equality of incomes but also higher economic growth. The ideal system would be a progressive consumption tax. Instead of imposing taxes based on income, taxes would be imposed based on purchases. There would be a few obvious benefits: savings would rise; revenue now lost to the underground economy—purchases made with money that is earned illegally—would be captured.

These advantages pale in comparison to the advantages of using consumption taxes to counteract the inefficiencies that arise from winner-take-all markets. For one, a progressive consumption tax would free up hundreds of billions of dollars of resources that are largely wasted through mine-is-bigger consumption races. Consider, for instance, a wealthy family's decision to build an 8,000-square-foot house. It does so not just because spacious living quarters are desirable in some absolute sense, but also because houses that size have become the norm for their income bracket. To have a smaller or less well-appointed house than one's peers would entail social embarrassment. Yet, if all wealthy families had smaller houses (as indeed most do in places like New York City, London, and Tokyo), no one would be embarrassed in the least.

Thus, if a consumption tax led wealthy families to buy 5,000-square-foot houses instead of 8,000,

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and Toyota Supras instead of Ferraris, no one would really be worse off, and several hundred thousand dollars of resources per family would be freed up for more pressing purposes—deficit reduction, medical research, capital investment, job training, school lunches, drug treatment programs, whatever.

Opponents of progressive consumption taxes will caution that such taxes will cause unemployment, citing the layoffs in the shipbuilding industry that followed imposition of a luxury tax on yachts in 1991. But that was a tax with a glaring loophole that exempted boats purchased outside the country. A general progressive tax on consumption would shift employment from some activities to others, to be sure, but that is precisely the objective.

The need to debate which consumption categories, if any, ought to be exempt can be avoided by having a large standard deduction—by making the first, say, $20,000 of annual consumption expenditures exempt from taxation. This feature would serve two purposes: It would shield necessities like food, health care, basic clothing, shelter, and transportation—from taxation, and it would make the tax progressive. The tax could be made even more progressive by having tax rates that rise with consumption, just as we now have tax rates that rise with income. The so-called "Unlimited-Savings-Allowance" proposal by Senators Nunn and Domenici is a tax with all these features.

Armey's tax would move us in precisely the wrong direction. By reducing the tax rates on top earners by more than half, it would steer even more of our best and brightest into winner-take-all markets that are already overcrowded. By giving the top earners much more disposable income, it would also fuel the growth of wasteful consumption expenditures, both by the rich and by others who emulate them. It would greatly worsen the social strains of income inequality. □

The Washington Monthly

JOURNALISM AWARD

September 1995

Art Levine
***New Times*, Miami, FL**

In September 1994, Dade County's AmeriCorps volunteers pledged "to get things done." One year later, federal officials shut off the local program's $1.4 million funding. Dade AmeriCorps had promised to create crime-watch programs, neighborhood patrols, crime-prevention workshops, and after-school projects for local communities. But little progress was made due to poor leadership, worker absenteeism, and lack of direct services. Art Levine shows that the problem was not the program itself, but the United Way administrators who ran it. Levine attributes the program's failure to bureaucratic bungling and points out that the administrators have largely dodged the blame. Dade County didn't fare as well—Levine says the lasting effects for residents will be "reinforced cynicism and hopelessness."

Leslie Brody and Jean Rimbach
***The Record*, Bergen County, NJ**

"More than 32,000 [New Jersey children] were at serious risk of harm because their families were ravaged by drug abuse, poverty, homelessness, emotional turmoil." *The Record* devoted months to "Shattered Childhood," a series studying the severely troubled Division for Youth and Family Services (DYFS). Stories showed months-old boarder babies who have never been inside a home and caseworkers who sent babies home with parents known to be drug-addicted or abusive. DYFS Deputy Director Jean Mendres said "official soul searching" came after the series examined four child-abuse deaths in June; DYFS is now cracking down on substance-abuse assessment and foster-care placement. Flooded by calls from concerned readers, *The Record* covered local volunteers at work and listed organizations in a special section, "How You Can Help."

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The Cost of Living It Up

Memo to budget cutters: What about COLAs?

BY GLENN HODGES

What Richard Nixon considered perhaps his biggest presidential mistake was hatched in a high stakes game of political chicken. And it had nothing to do with Watergate.

It was 1972, and Congress was poised to pass the fourth increase in Social Security benefits in five years. The first three had totaled over 40 percent, well outdistancing the cumulative 27 percent inflation rate. But the economy was strong, and it was an election year. Nixon signaled to Congress that he was willing to sign a 5 percent increase—but no more.

The Democratic-controlled Congress was moving towards a 10 percent increase, apparently believing Nixon would veto the bill and take the heat at the polls. Then, according to Eugene McCarthy, who had just left the Senate but was still in contact with his colleagues at the time, word got to Congress that Nixon would call their bluff and sign the bill.

Wilbur Mills, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, wasn't about to let him off that easily. Mills, a powerful Democrat in a highly partisan arena, was also a presidential candidate. He saw a golden opportunity: In one fell swoop, he could curry favor with the senior citizen vote and hold Nixon's feet to the fire. He pushed a 20 percent increase onto the bill extending the federal debt ceiling and effectively dared Nixon to veto it.

But Nixon didn't blink—he signed the bill and made sure he got his share of the credit for the fattened benefit checks. As expensive as the 20 percent raise was, though, the fiscal damage had just begun. Because attached to that bill was a provision that permanently indexed Social Security benefits to the Consumer Price Index (CPI), ensuring annual benefit increases and making future appropriation games unnecessary. Good-bye political chicken. Hello COLAs.

At the time, the annual Cost of Living Adjustments had broad bipartisan support. Federal civil service and military pensions had been indexed to the CPI in the early sixties, and many lawmakers saw COLAs as a way to compensate for rising inflation and a Congress that was intent on dishing out huge election-year benefit increases. But neither Nixon nor anybody else anticipated the coming

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decade's severe oil shocks and double-digit inflation. No one knew that Social Security benefits would virtually double after just eight COLAs, and that the average beneficiary would, by 1981, be receiving annual checks worth more than half of his final working wage, compared to only 38 percent in 1974. No one realized how badly the CPI overstated housing costs—especially for the elderly, who were more likely to have paid off their mortgages—and how this would artificially inflate COLAs beyond any real increase in the cost of living.

Further, no one foresaw just how much federal retirement benefits would outpace wages in the coming decade's unprecedented combination of economic stagnation and raging inflation. In 1972, federal officials were confident that a growing economy would easily cover the cost of COLAs. Wages, they predicted, would continue to grow by 56 percent every two decades. However, over the next two decades, median earnings *fell* by about 15 percent. Meanwhile, inflation soared into the double digits—and Social Security benefits rose as well, point by point, with the Consumer Price Index. Between 1970 and 1982, average Social Security benefits rose 37 percent in real terms. The elderly saw their real median household income increase 28.4 percent between 1973 and 1991. Meanwhile the median household income for those between 25 and 34 dropped almost 10 percent. Welcome to the modern era.

As the Social Security system became more and more expensive—even requiring emergency congressional reprieves in 1977 and 1983—Nixon, the last president to sign a balanced budget, regretted that COLAs made it so much harder for any successor to do the same. It was, he told the Concord Coalition's Peter G. Peterson, his "most serious economic and fiscal mistake."

But Social Security wasn't the only program to balloon during the decade of stagflation. Federal civil service and military pensions have doubled as a percentage of federal spending since 1970. At an annual cost of $65 billion, they are now the nation's fourth largest entitlement, after Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. It is estimated that one-half of current federal pension costs are due to COLAs, and that hundreds of thousands of federal retirees actually receive more money in retirement than they did while working.

The Wasteland

With the CPI at 2.6 percent—continuing a decade-long trend of low inflation—one might wonder, what's the problem with COLAs now? Simple. They're wasteful and unfair. Unfair because Cost of Living Adjustments insulate certain groups (those who get them) from the effects of inflation, while leaving others (those who don't) to bear its brunt. For instance, federal retirees are virtually the only Americans to get full COLAs as a part of their pension plans. Only 5 percent of private plans provide annual adjustments for inflation, and very few of those plans provide full COLAs. In fact, two-thirds of all workers don't even get pensions. In terms of total household income, federal retirees tower above the rest of America. The average income for households age 65 and over was $24,424 in 1991. The average income for federal retirees' households was about twice that: $52,248 for military retirees; $45,912 for retired civil servants.

And COLAs are wasteful because Uncle Sam gives them to people who don't need the money. An annual $100,000 congressional pension gets the same percentage increase as a $10,000 civil service pension. But in dollar amounts, that increase is 10 times larger. Former Congressman Hastings Keith, for example, receives four annual federal pensions (congressional, military, civil service, and widower's), which will pay him $115,000 this year alone. That means that every year he gets three times what he contributed during his entire work history.

Keith, who founded the National Committee on Public Employee Pension Systems 15 years ago, says full COLAs on entire pension benefits are unnecessary, and he's right. He receives 15 times more in COLAs than the average Social Security recipient. This year, he'll receive $263 a month in COLAs alone.

"That's not the cost of living," says David Keating of the National Taxpayers' Union. "It's

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the cost of living it up."

As everyone in Washington knows, it's easier to give than to take away, and COLAs are no exception. Retired federal employees— like Social Security recipients—fiercely guard their benefits and their COLAs. The National Association of Retired Federal Employees, with half a million dues-paying members, was the 20th largest PAC contributor in the 1992 election cycle (and the fifth largest contributor in 1988). Add the election contributions of the three postal employee associations, and federal employees outspent the country's largest PAC, the American Medical Association, by 40 percent. Any politician who has ever suggested cutting Social Security is also painfully familiar with the power of the 34 million-member American Association of Retired Persons (AARP).

The best reform plans all have one element in common: They retain COLAs for those who truly need them and reduce or eliminate them for those who don't.

Both Presidents Bush and Clinton eyed minor COLA cutbacks as a way to reduce the deficit—Bush for federal pensions, Clinton for Social Security. Both were lambasted, not just by the lobbies but by their own parties in Congress. Yet, without a major overhaul, the portion of the budget taken up by pensions and Social Security will continue to balloon; over the next five years, according to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), entitlement increases from COLAs will add up to $221 billion.

With the budget ostensibly moving toward balance, this is a common sense cut. "COLA restrictions would achieve considerable savings," the CBO has concluded, "by exacting small reductions in benefits from a large number of people, in contrast to other budget options that would impose large reductions in benefits on smaller groups of recipients."

One way to reduce the size of COLAs is through an adjustment in the Consumer Price Index. A host of policymakers, from Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan to Senators Bob Dole and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, are interested in reducing the CPI (and thus lowering COLAs) because of widespread agreement that the index does not accurately reflect the real cost of living. Economists claim, for instance, that the CPI fails to consider the fact that when one product becomes more expensive, consumers buy a cheaper product, or they go to a discount outlet and pay less than standard retail. A Senate Finance Committee commission recently identified five such biases, and tentatively concluded that the CPI is between 0.7 and 2 percentage points too high. It will issue a final report next June.

Clearly, the CPI should be made as accurate as possible. The CBO predicts that a one-point reduction would save $634 billion over 10 years (though a large share of this would come from increased tax receipts because of the effect on tax brackets.).

But a reduction in the CPI doesn't do enough to remedy the waste and unfairness of COLAs. The best reform plans all have one element in common: They retain COLAs for those who truly need them and reduce or eliminate them for those who don't.

Senators Bob Kerrey (D–Neb.) and Alan Simpson (D–Wyo.), the main congressional crusaders against entitlement waste these days, included a COLA reform act in their eight-part plan this spring. They would limit full COLAs to the 30 percent who get the smallest benefits in each federal retirement program, including Social Security. So if there were 100 people in a program, only the bottom 30 would get a full COLA. Everyone else would get what the 30th person is getting. That means everyone would get enough of an increase to meet basic living needs, but the obscene increases would end.

Reducing or eliminating COLAs for retirement benefits above a certain level would be a good start, but even that approach is imperfect. Retirees with large benefits but small total incomes would suffer, while wealthier retirees with smaller benefits would get full COLAs. The best way around this is to use the income-tax system to withhold COLAs (or, better yet, benefits) from those whose income exceeds certain levels. It's a bitter pill for Congress to prescribe, but with entitlements eating more and more of the budget every year, the country's long-term health depends on it. □

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Tidbits & Outrages

NEWS YOU CAN CHOOSE

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The New York Times, October 19, 1995

New York Times Net Fell 73% in Quarter Due to Year-Ago Gain

The Wall Street Journal, same day

BILL GATES? HE'S UPPER MIDDLE CLASS

North Carolina state legislator Fred Heineman collects a hefty police pension and a salary from the state for a total annual income of $183,500. But he told the *Raleigh News and Observer* that he doesn't consider himself rich enough to be middle class. "When I see someone who is making anywhere from $300,000 to $750,000 a year, that's middle class," he said.

THE CASE FOR SUBTLETY

Rep. Thomas Cass Ballenger (R–N.C.) describes his fundraising pitch this way: "I'd say, 'Guess who might be chairman of the committee who'd be in charge of OSHA.' And they'd say, 'Who?' And I'd say, 'Me!' And I'd say, 'I need some money.' And—whoosh!—I got it."

THE TIES THAT BIND

A mother in Decatur, Georgia has been awarded custody of her daughter, although she had tried to keep the girl from running away by chaining her ankles together.

IN A RELATED STORY, GINSU CANCELS ITS CAMPAIGN "BUY A KNIFE FOR YOUR WIFE"

After the O.J. verdict, the maker of Starburst candy hastily pulled a national ad campaign with the slogans "Turn loose the juice" and "The juice is loose."

THAT'S CHARLIE *WILSON*, NOT CHARLIE SHEEN

Finance reports show that Rep. Charles Wilson's (D–Texas) office paid $400 to "Top Ladies of Distinction." *The Hill* newspaper wondered if the representative, who was called "Good-time Charlie" by *GQ*, might be engaged in some extra-curricular activities at taxpayer expense. Turns out it's a "national group that promotes civic leadership among women."

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Bobby Kennedy's War on Castro

An inside look at the CIA plot to kill Fidel—and what that tells us about JFK's assassination

BY EVAN THOMAS

After World War II, when the United States was just beginning to assume its superpower role, foreign policy was made quite informally. There was no national security staff—policy was made by Defense Secretary James Forrestal and White House advisor Clark Clifford over lunch at the F Street Club, and approved by Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Arthur Vandenburg, who would receive Undersecretary of State Robert Lovett for martinis and classified cables in his apartment at the old Wardman Park Hotel every afternoon at five.

These men did get a lot done, and much of it was good: the Marshall Plan, the Western Alliance, the Berlin Air Lift. But with freedom sometimes came excess—particularly in the world of spies. The free-wheeling Central Intelligence Agency bribed officials and overthrew foreign governments without much debate by its executive branch masters, who hid behind the convenient doctrine of "plausible deniability." For them, covert action was appealing because it was cheap and, generally speaking, did not risk World War III.

But covert action and ad hoc foreign policy didn't always work as intended. This was especially true of the clumsy attempts by the CIA to get rid of Fidel Castro during the early years of the Cuban dictator's regime, from 1960 to 1964. The CIA's blunders against Castro would have been funny if they hadn't been so dangerous. The botched Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961 and the many assassination attempts—the CIA even hired the Mafia to make a failed attempt—helped persuade Castro to accept nuclear-tipped missiles on the island in 1962, leading the world to the brink during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

The last of the CIA's plots to kill Castro is a truly weird tale. Following the Bay of Pigs fiasco, President Kennedy deputized his brother (also his attorney general) Robert Kennedy to personally oversee the CIA's campaign against Castro. Typical of the Kennedy administration's highly informal style, Bobby Kennedy bypassed CIA Director John McCone and demanded regular progress reports from Desmond FitzGerald, a dashing CIA officer who be-

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Evan Thomas is Washington Bureau Chief of Newsweek. *This article is an adaptation from* The Very Best Men *(Simon and Schuster, 1995). Printed by permission.*

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came head of the CIA Special Affairs Staff (SAS) at the beginning of 1963, charged with doing whatever he could to eliminate the Cuban leader. The bizarre events that were to unfold have fueled generations of Kennedy assassination conspiracy theorists.

The winter FitzGerald took over the Cuban operation, he made clear to his troops that he wanted results. FitzGerald's executive officer, Sam Halpern, tried to show him an organizational chart of the Special Affairs Staff, but FitzGerald said he didn't want to see it; he didn't want to be bothered with bureaucratic detail. "But Des...," Halpern protested. "You do it," said FitzGerald. He refused to sign the chart or even look at it.

During the summer and early fall, five commando raids were launched against Castro's economic infrastructure, in the hopes of "destabilizing" the regime. The raids were costly: Twenty-five CIA agents, Cuban exiles recruited as commandos, were killed or captured. Though it was doubtful that the commandos would bring down Castro by knocking down some telephone poles or by petty acts of sabotage (the negligible Cuban underground was instructed to leave faucets running and light bulbs burning to waste energy), FitzGerald was determined to keep trying.

"We were saying, 'Please don't expect that any one of these things is going to be a catalyst'," recalled Ted Shackley, the Miami station chief. "But FitzGerald felt under pressure to make these things work, and the pressure came from Robert Kennedy. He'd say, 'I saw Bobby,' or 'I ran into Bobby. I saw him in Middleburg. Here's what we got to crank up for next month.' We would say, tactfully. We can make it work. But the question is, will these events bring Castro down?'"

Halpern said he began to "dread coming in to work in the morning," especially Monday mornings after FitzGerald had all weekend to "run into" Kennedy and think up his own schemes—"all these harebrained ideas," as Halpern described a series of plots that would seem like black comedy when they surfaced later during the Church Committee hearings. "[Bobby]," said Halpern bluntly, "reinforced [FitzGerald's] worst instincts."

By the time FitzGerald took over the Cuba operation, the CIA had pretty well given up on using the mob. The plots of Bill Harvey, FitzGerald's predecessor as head of the Cuba group, to enlist the Mafia had gone nowhere. In the spring of 1962, Harvey had given John Rosselli, his mob contact, four poison capsules and assured him "they would work anywhere and at any time with any thing." Harvey and Miami station chief Shackley also rented a U-Haul truck, filled it with $5,000 worth of explosives and weapons, left the van in a parking lot, and handed the keys to Rosselli.

But Rosselli's Cuban agents were unable—or perhaps never really tried—to kill Castro. In February 1963, just as FitzGerald was taking over Cuban operations, Harvey had a drunken farewell dinner with Rosselli, with whom he had become pals (They shared a hatred of Bobby Kennedy.) FBI gumshoes, who had Rosselli under routine surveillance, looked on in disbelief.

The amicable divorce from the mob did not mean an end to attempts to kill Castro. FitzGerald was forced to come up with more schemes. His inclination in these matters was to exploit the hobbies of his targets. With Indonesian President Sukarno, it had been airline stewardesses. With Castro, it was underwater swimming.

Before FitzGerald arrived to take over the Cuban operation, a CIA officer had suggested killing Castro by poisoning his diving suit. The Technical Services Division (TSD) purchased a suit, which it contaminated with fungus spores that would cause a chronic skin disease. The mouthpiece on the breathing apparatus was treated with tuberculosis bacilli. To deliver the suit, the CIA wanted to recruit James B. Donovan, the American lawyer negotiating the return of the Bay of Pigs prisoners from Cuba. Donovan had already given Castro a (noncontaminated) wet suit, however, and the scheme was discarded. It is a mystery how anyone imagined that the plot would not be easily traced—the suit was to be a gift, after all, of the United States.

FitzGerald continued to look beneath the waves for a method of eliminating his target. His idea

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was an exploding seashell, to be placed on the ocean floor where Castro liked to go skin diving. "He came in with this bright idea," Halpern recalled. FitzGerald's staff asked how he planned to make sure that Castro picked up the right shell. "Put a neon sign on it?" asked Halpern. TSD had boasted they could make a bomb out of anything, but this request stumped even Dr. Gottlieb's men. "Des thought this was a put-up job by me and TSD," said Halpern. "He was really mad. 'The President wants this,' he said."

Understanding the relationship between FitzGerald and Robert Kennedy is necessary if one is to make sense of FitzGerald's actions as chief of covert action for Cuba. RFK bewildered FitzGerald. At first, he found the President's younger brother to be bumptious. But as FitzGerald watched the younger Kennedy go to work on the CIA, he was encouraged by Kennedy's boldness, his willingness to cut through the bureaucracy and demand results. But he also found Kennedy imperious and a little reckless. In their father, FitzGerald's children observed wariness and ambivalence toward Kennedy—contempt mixed with deference and even uncharacteristic subservience.

Bobby was a force of nature, willing to bully anyone. "He could sack a town and enjoy it," Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Maxwell Taylor remarked after watching the attorney general chew out the Special Group, all senior government officials. "Bob Kennedy was very difficult to deal with," said Thomas Parrott, the Special Group's secretary. "He was arrogant; he knew it all; he knew the answer to everything. He sat there, tie down, chewing gum, his feet up on the desk. His threats were transparent. It was, 'If you don't do it, I'll tell my big brother on you.'"

There is more than a little irony to the picture of FitzGerald manipulated by an amateur gamesman. That is precisely the way the "professionals" in the agency had felt about FitzGerald when he arrived from Wall Street in 1950. The difference is that FitzGerald, though cold at times, was a gentleman, while Kennedy, though capable of warmth, was not. FitzGerald had become a professional over time, and he had reason to bridle at the cavalier quality of Bobby Kennedy's leadership. Although FitzGerald was too responsive to Kennedy for Halpern's taste, he was also no pushover. FitzGerald was a formidable figure, and he resisted some of Kennedy's more unreasonable demands. At a meeting on April 3, 1963, RFK proposed sending commando raids of a

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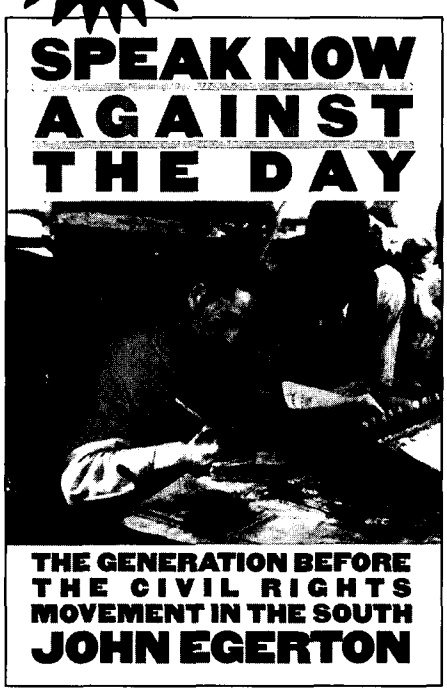

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hundred to five hundred men to blow up factories and attack military bases. FitzGerald calmly noted that "if such groups could be landed, it would probably be impossible for them to survive any length of time."

But FitzGerald could not escape Kennedy's incessant demands. While at FitzGerald's country house, FitzGerald's nephew Albert Francke recalled overhearing his uncle say, firmly and loudly into the telephone one Sunday afternoon in 1963, "No, Bobby, we can't do that."

FitzGerald's daughter Joan Denny remembered her father entering into a towering rage upon learning that Bobby had been meeting privately with Cuban exiles. RFK was entertaining Cuban exiles at his house, Hickory Hill, and calling them at their apartments at the Ebbitt Hotel in downtown Washington, where they were housed by the CIA. FitzGerald was very wary of the Cuban exiles. "I have dealt with a very rich assortment of exiles in the past," he wrote his daughter Frances in June 1963, "but none can compare with the Cuban group for genuine stupidity and militant childishness. At times I feel sorry for Castro—a sculptor in silly putty." Having the attorney general freelance with the Cuban exile community was, FitzGerald felt, an invitation to disaster.

The exiles were even granted an audience with the President, who promised to avenge the Bay of Pigs. FitzGerald may have noted with apprehension that one of the exiles escorted into the Oval Office, Tony Varona, had been hired earlier by the CIA's mob contact, Johnny Rosselli, to make an attempt to kill Castro. To bring an assassin into the Oval Office was hardly the way to preserve plausible deniability.

Enter AMLASH

In the many attempts to get rid of Fidel Castro, the CIA had always been confounded by the lack of a good delivery system—an assassin who was at once close to Castro and willing to kill him. In the fall of 1963, FitzGerald's attention turned to a Cuban major, Rolando Cubela Secades, code name AMLASH.

First recruited as an agent by the CIA in 1961, Cubela had access to Castro and, equally important, experience as an assassin. In 1959, as a student revolutionary, he had shot and killed Batista's chief of military intelligence. Cubela had grown disenchanted with Castro and wanted to lead a coup against him. He was willing to kill Castro, though the word "assassinate" offended him; he preferred "eliminate." In October 1963, he told his CIA handlers that he wanted a show of support from the United States government. Cubela asked to meet personally with Robert F. Kennedy.

This demand was impossible, but FitzGerald agreed to meet with Cubela as RFK's "personal representative." FitzGerald sent word to AMLASH that he would see him at a CIA safe house in Paris on October 29. He came to regret this decision.

For a senior CIA official with close ties to the White House to meet with a foreign asset to discuss an assassination plot was highly unorthodox, even in that freewheeling era. It broke the rules of trade craft, which seek to build in deniability and secrecy through the use of cut-outs—go-betweens who are kept in the dark about the identities of their true masters—and by restricting access to information to those who need to know. FitzGerald was a careful professional, but in this case his activist instinct, abetted by RFK's prodding, got the better of his judgment.

The Special Affairs Staff objected to the idea of a meeting between their chief and AMLASH. The SAS counterintelligence officer, Joseph Langosch, warned FitzGerald that Cubela might be a "dangle"—a double agent recruited by Castro to penetrate the American plots against him. Certainly Cubela was "insecure," in the jargon of counterintelligence. He was said to be haunted by the memory of pulling the trigger while Batista's intelligence chief was smiling at him. With the CIA, he had indignantly refused to take a lie-detector test. The Cubans were notoriously leaky, while Castro's security service, the DGI, had been well trained by the East Germans, who had a knack for working double agents.

FitzGerald's boss, Richard Helms, "shared the qualms [of the SAS staff]." As the head of the clandestine service, he could have vetoed the trip. "But," Helms later explained, "I was also getting my ass beaten. You should have enjoyed the experience of Bobby Kennedy rampant on your back." Helms signed off on FitzGerald's meeting with Cubela. Although FitzGerald was going in Robert Kennedy's name, Richard Helms decided it was "unnecessary" to tell the attorney general, whom he regarded as an even greater risk-taker than

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FitzGerald. "Bobby wouldn't have backed away," said Helms. "He probably would have gone himself." It shows the level of pressure felt by the CIA that Helms, normally careful to cover his back, didn't even bother to get Kennedy's authorization.

On October 21, FitzGerald cabled his daughter Frances: "Arriving Paris October 29 10:15 A.M. KLM 403 frabjous Tuesday 29th beamish birthday." ("Frabjous" and "beamish" are expressions of delight from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.) At noon on the 29th, FitzGerald had a cheery birthday lunch with his daughter. At 5:30 P.M. that afternoon he met at a CIA safe house with the man he hoped would finally eliminate Fidel Castro.

FitzGerald used a false name (James Clark) but no disguise when he met Cubela. AMLASH "spoke repeatedly of the need for an assassination weapon. In particular, he wanted a high-powered rifle with telescopic sights or some other weapon that could be used to kill Castro from a distance," FitzGerald later recounted. FitzGerald responded that he "wanted no part of such a scheme." Cubela was told that "the United States does not do such things."

Or so FitzGerald told the CIA's inspector general, who was preparing a report in the spring of 1967 on the agency's assassination attempts. "The written record," the inspector general notes, "tells a somewhat different story." A memo prepared at the time by Nestor Sanchez, the case officer who was also at the meeting, stated that "nothing of an operational nature was discussed." Cubela was "satisfied with the policy discussion." After the meeting he asked the case officer what "technical support" the United States would provide to carry out the "policy," by which he presumably meant the violent overthrow of Castro. Testifying before the Church Committee in 1975, the case officer stated that Cubela made it clear that for a coup to work, Castro would have to be assassinated first. There is no indication that FitzGerald disagreed or refused to provide "technical support."

In fact, on November 19, 1963, FitzGerald approved of "telling Cubela he would be given a cache inside Cuba. Cache could, if he requested it, include ... high power rifles with scopes." The memorandum for the record also noted that "C/SAS [FitzGerald] requested written reports on AMLASH operation be kept to a minimum." A second meeting between Cubela and his CIA case officer was set up at the Paris safe house to convey this message. At the last minute FitzGerald decided to throw in another offering to Cubela: a poison pen.

Cubela was looking for some small "exotic" weapon—a dart gun, perhaps—he could use with deadly effect in close quarters. Cubela, a medical doctor, told the CIA he was sure they could come up with some clever "technical means." The elves in the Operation Division of the Office of Medical Services worked through the night and produced a ball-point pen—a Paper Mate—rigged with a hypodermic syringe. The needle was "so fine," Dr. Edward Gunn of Medical Services later boasted to the inspector general, "that the victim would hardly feel it when it was inserted—he compared it with the scratch from a shirt with too much starch." Cubela was to be told that he could load the pen with Blackleaf 40, a fatal nicotine-based insecticide available at the time on the shelves of hardware stores.

Retribution?

On November 22, 1963, Des FitzGerald had just finished hosting a lunch for an old friend of the CIA, a foreign diplomat, at the City Tavern Club in Georgetown, when he was summoned from the private dining room by the maître d'. FitzGerald returned "as white as a ghost," recalled Sam Halpern. Normally erect and purposeful, FitzGerald was walking slowly, with his head down. "The President has been shot," he said.

The lunch immediately broke up. On the way out the door Halpern anxiously said, "I hope this has nothing to do with the Cubans." FitzGerald mumbled, "Yeah, well, we'll see."

In the 15-minute car ride back to Langley, FitzGerald just stared straight ahead. FitzGerald knew that, in September, Castro had threatened to retaliate against assassination attempts. "United States leaders should think that if they are aiding in terrorist plans to eliminate Cuban leaders, they themselves will not be safe," the Cuban leader had publicly declared. The warning that Cubela might be a "dangle," that he might be secretly working for Castro, took an ominous new meaning. Now FitzGerald had to wonder: Had Castro killed Kennedy before Kennedy could kill him?

In Paris, Cubela had just finished asking for 20 hand grenades, two high-powered rifles with tele-

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scopic sights, and 20 pounds of C-4 explosive, to be dropped on a friend's farm, when he was told that President Kennedy was assassinated. He was "visibly moved," according to the case officer's report. "Why do such things happen to good people?" he asked. Within a few hours the case officer received a cable from FitzGerald in Washington telling him, he later recalled, that "everything was off." The case officer was told to break off contact with AMLASH and return immediately to Washington.

CIA headquarters at Langley was in a state of chaos when FitzGerald and Halpern returned from the City Tavern Club. "We all went to the battle stations," recalled Richard Helms. "Was this a plot? Who was pulling the strings? And who was next?" In the basement vault occupied by the Special Affairs Staff, "all kinds of theories popped up," said Halpern. "Was it Castro? We had no intelligence. We didn't think Castro was that crazy. We thought maybe it had to do with KGB 'wet affairs'—sabotage and assassination."

When Lee Harvey Oswald was arrested early that afternoon, the CIA began to piece together his background, which was worrisome. He had defected to the Soviet Union in 1959, and then redefected back to the United States in 1962. More recently, in September, he had been spotted by CIA cameras entering the Soviet embassy in Mexico City, ostensibly to get a visa. While there, Oswald had been interviewed by a KGB agent, Valery Kostikov. This was a startling discovery. Kostikov was a member of the KGB's 13th Department, which handled "wet affairs."

The deputy chief of the CIA's Soviet Division, T. H. Bagley, immediately saw the sinister implications. "Putting it baldly," he wrote to his superiors on Saturday, November 23, "was Oswald, wittingly or unwittingly, part of a plot to murder President Kennedy in Dallas?" The CIA's counterintelligence staff began working around the clock to see whom else Kostikov had been talking to in his Mexico City lair.

In due course, one of the names that turned up was Rolando Cubela—the very man FitzGerald had hoped would kill Castro. This was potentially a vital link in trying to solve the mystery of Kennedy's death. The counter intelligence staff put out a routine "trace" to see if anyone in the agency knew Cubela.

FitzGerald remained silent. Technically, he did not have to answer. Tucked away in its basement vault, compartmented from the rest of the agency, the Special Affairs Staff had received a special exemption from queries by the counterintelligence staff. Still, under the circumstances, it would seem proper to cooperate in the CIA's own investigation of the President's murder.

But FitzGerald was wary of the CIA's chief of counterintelligence, James Jesus Angleton. The legendary mole hunter was growing increasingly drunken and conspiratorial in the early 1960s. As he downed serial martinis over four-hour lunches at Chez Niçoise in Georgetown, he would puzzle over counterintelligence cases that had been sitting on his desk for months, even years. To him, the Sino-Soviet split was just a trick designed to lull the West, and any CIA official, up to and including the director, was a potential mole.

What would he have made of Cubela and his link to Kostikov? FitzGerald thought Angleton was mentally unstable. If Angleton was allowed into the SAS vault, Castro was safe; all action against him would stop. Angleton never did catch any moles, for all his machinations. "There is not a goddamned thing Angleton or his henchmen could have come up with," insisted Halpern in 1993. "Des thought, 'What the hell is Jim going to tell me?'"

FitzGerald had never told the director of Central Intelligence, John McCone, about Cubela. McCone was a wealthy Texas businessman who had been brought in to replace Allen Dulles after the Bay of Pigs. An outsider and a bit of a moralist, he had been kept ignorant of all the CIA's assassination plots. In the "need-to-know" world of the CIA, Richard Helms had decided that McCone did not need to know. Authority for the assassination plots was apparently something that could "spring forward" after a change of CIA directors—or even presidents. To Helms, the unrelenting pressure from Bobby Kennedy had sufficed as authorization. Besides, McCone did not want to know. When the subject of assassination was briefly raised (and quickly suppressed) at a meeting of the Special Group in August 1962, McCone, a good Catholic, had worried that if he got "involved in something like this" he might get excommunicated.

FitzGerald was sitting in front of the television with his wife on Sunday morning, November 24, when Jack Ruby stepped from a crowd and shot

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Oswald. FitzGerald began to cry, for the first and last time in his wife's experience. "Now we'll never know," he said.

FitzGerald never said anything more about it, and he kept his secrets even from the investigators of the Warren Commission, which was never informed about AMLASH or any of the CIA's Mafia plots. ("They didn't ask," said Richard Helms.) Still, it would be a mistake to make too much of the mystery. To be sure, Angleton never got over suspecting that the Russians or Cubans plotted to kill Kennedy. He thought the Russian defector Yuri Nosenko, who claimed that the Kremlin was innocent, was a KGB plant to throw the CIA off the trail. But most reputable students of the Kennedy assassination have concluded that Khrushchev and Castro did not kill Kennedy, if only because neither man wanted to start World War III.

Somewhat more plausible suspects are renegade Cuban exiles, conceivably abetted by rogue CIA agents. With his distrust and contempt for exiles, FitzGerald must have worried at least a little on this score. The FBI had been cracking down on extremist groups like Alpha 66 that wanted to overthrow Castro (the agency worried they would trip over their own plots). There had been considerable grumbling in the exile community in Miami that Kennedy had betrayed the Brigade at the Bay of Pigs. Had some hotheads tried to get even? Curiously, FitzGerald did not try very hard to investigate. "I was just told to watch the island," said Ted Shackley. "The mainland was the FBI's territory." The officers of JMWAVE, the CIA's anti-Cuba operation, talked to some of their informants, but mostly they left the job to the FBI—which did very little, according to a report by a congressional committee set up in 1979 to re-investigate the Kennedy assassination.

FitzGerald had trouble giving up on Cubela. The CIA tried to put the Cuban major in touch with exile groups that might supply him with weapons on their own. Finally, in 1965, AMLASH was cut loose. The counterintelligence men at last convinced FitzGerald that Cubela was a poor security risk. Indeed, Castro was on to him: In March 1966, Cubela was arrested and tried for treason. Castro commuted his death sentence, possibly for cooperating with his secret police. For the CIA, a strange era was over. □

Who's Who

A recent poll shows **Hillary Clinton**'s rating to be eight points lower then her husband's. This is her lowest point yet during his presidency and part of a largely downward trend since early 1994. Seeking an explanation, we have consulted one of our best-informed sources, a local hairdresser who offered a theory that will probably not appear in the Annals of the American Political Science Association: Hillary's seemingly weekly change of hairstyle betrays an uncertainty about her identity that is unsettling to the public....

Liberal Democrats have been similarly unsettled by **Bill Clinton**'s repudiation of the 1993 tax increase which they feel they risked their political necks for and by Clinton's cozying up to neoconservative **Ben Wattenberg**. This is all said to be part of new guru **Dick Morris**'s triangulation policy. An advisor who was once very close to Clinton told us that Morris gained influence by persuading Clinton that the liberals were to blame for his failures. This worked, the former advisor says, because "the President will go a long way to avoid blaming himself."...

Speaking of **Dick Morris**, he was, according to *The Washington Post*'s **Al Kamen**, recently waiting for a flu shot in a doctor's office where he was overheard talking into his cellular phone about how he was "running the country" and complaining about someone who was "out to get him." After finishing his call Morris grew impatient with waiting. "I'm the chief advisor to the President. I have a conference call with him at four, and I must get my shot now."...

The long-range goal of the reformers who elected **John Sweeney** as AFL-CIO president in October is to replace him with **Richard Trumka**, the former head of the United Mine Workers who was elected AFL-CIO secretary-treasurer on the Sweeney slate....

Sometimes it's hard to plow all the way through those long *New Yorker* profiles. But if you had just hung in there to the 13th page of **Connie Bruck**'s recent piece on **Newt Gingrich** you would have learned that GOPAC once sent out a word list to aspiring Republican candidates so they could "speak like Newt." Recommended words used to describe Democrats included "sick," "traitors," "corrupt," "bizarre," "cheat," "steal," "devour," "self-serving," and "criminal rights." ...

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Hillary's Hair ... Newt Cleans Up ... Morris Gets Shot ... A N'Ito Halloween ...

Speaking of **Newt**, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* has revealed that Cobb County, Georgia, his home, received $1.80 back from Washington for every tax dollar collected, compared with 82 cents received by New York City, which Gingrich called a "culture of waste." Cobb County got back $9,878 for each and every one of its residents....

Back to **Hillary** again: If she's coming to visit, her advance staff will tell you to be sure the fridge is stocked with Diet Coke and cranberry juice....

If AARP members are wondering why their organization didn't fight harder against Medicare cuts, **Fred Barnes** says it is because **Newt** devoted a lot of attention to developing "camaraderie" with **Horace Deets**, who happens to be the AARP's executive director....

The New York Post's **Liz Smith** says that **Roger Ailes** is going to be an advisor for the presidential campaign of conservative **Malcolm "Steve" Forbes**. Ailes, who had been a campaign guru for **Ronald Reagan** and **George Bush**, is now head of CNBC. Ailes's role with the Forbes campaign will not comfort those who suspect CNBC of leaning to the right....

Speaking of political bias in the media, every time PBS is accused of having a liberal tilt, we think of **Louis Rukeyser,** who has been a PBS star for a couple of decades and whose political views are suggested by the generous time and the softball questions he recently gave to **Dick Armey** and his advocacy of a flat tax....

In his new book, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, **James Baker** talks about a practical inducement for Soviet support of the Gulf War. When **Mikhail Gorbachev** asked Baker "Can you help get some money from the Saudis for us?" Baker arranged for a $4 billion line of credit. Baker also reveals that he told Iraq's foreign minister, **Tariq Aziz**, when they met in Geneva just before the war started, "If the conflict involves your use of chemical or biological weapons against our forces, the American people will demand vengeance. We have the means to exact it. This is not a threat. It is a promise."...

There's still a lot of speculation over who will get top jobs in the **Clinton** campaign. Longtime Democratic veteran **Ann Lewis** remains the top communications person in the campaign entourage, but the campaign still needs a traveling press secretary. This is usually a job held by someone with a tart tongue, who can fling charges against rivals. Among those under consideration is **Mary Ellen Glynn** (of the White House press office) who is widely liked but may not have the killer instinct. Who will manage the Clinton campaign? **Dick Morris** will probably be the de facto manager. But Morris has become so unpopular among White House staff for his brusque manner and his history of helping right-wingers like **Jesse Helms** that some think he could fall. So far Morris has the full backing of the President. At the senior staff level, though, Morris and **Harold Ickes** continue to squabble....

We're not sure what this means, but the most popular Halloween mask this year was the face of Judge **Lance Ito**. Number two: **Newt Gingrich**....

Our friends at *The New Republic* claim to be the "first media outlet to subject [**Colin Powell**] to lengthy and tough scrutiny." Maybe they had already taken off for the holidays when our December 1994 issue appeared with a cover story on Powell by **Jon Meacham**. *TNR*'s article appeared in April of this year. Meacham, by the way, predicted that Powell would not run....

—*Susan Threadgill*

Roman Genn

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Memo of the Month

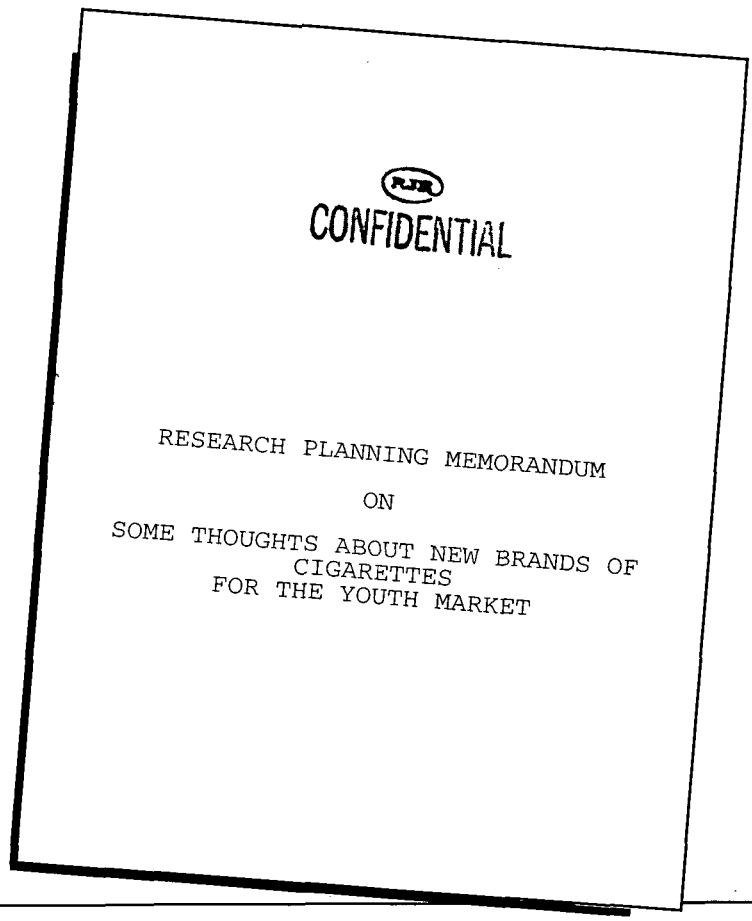
From the company that brought you Joe Camel

The Monthly *doesn't usually publish such a lengthy Memo of the Month, but this is an unusual memo. It was written in 1973 by Claude Teague, Jr.—then the assistant director of research and development for R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. The title says it all: "Some Thoughts About New Brands of Cigarettes For the Youth Market."*

RJR is in the midst of an advertising campaign which argues that the Food and Drug Administration should not be given a greater role in regulating tobacco and touts the company's work to prevent underage smoking. This memo is a detailed glimpse at the industry's real face. Tobacco companies understand the size and economic strength of "the twenty-one year old and under group." Although cigarette consumption has declined in the last two decades, it has increased among youth. The vast majority of nicotine addicts get hooked before they are 18 and can legally buy cigarettes.

Lest you think that RJR is the only company targeting kids, consider that this is not the only memo of its kind. As Morton Mintz reported in The Nation *in 1991, Imperial Tobacco Ltd. produced a marketing plan in 1971 that said "young smokers represent the major opportunity group for the cigarette industry." And, lest you think that RJR has since reformed, consider the 1990 memos from company managers to the sales force. The sales people were urged to target stores "that are heavily frequented by young adult shoppers. These stores can be in close proximity to colleges [or] high schools...."*

Please note: Because of the poor quality of the original, the text has been re-typed. None of the words have been changed, though a short section in which the author summarizes his findings has been omitted.



RJR

CONFIDENTIAL

RESEARCH PLANNING MEMORANDUM

ON

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT NEW BRANDS OF CIGARETTES FOR THE YOUTH MARKET

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Memo

At the outset it should be said that we are presently, and I believe unfairly, constrained from directly presenting cigarettes to the youth market; that is, to those in the approximately twenty-one year old and under group. Statistics show, however, that large, perhaps even increasing numbers in that group are becoming smokers each year, despite bans on the promotion of cigarettes to them. If this be so, there is certainly nothing immoral or unethical about our Company attempting to attract those smokers to our products. We should not in any way influence non-smokers to start smoking: rather we should simply recognize that many or most of the "21 and under" group will inevitably become smokers, and offer them an opportunity to use our brands.

Realistically, if our Company is to survive and prosper, over the long term we must get our share of the youth market. In my opinion this will require new brands tailored to the youth market; I believe it unrealistic to expect that existing brands identified with an over-thirty "establishment" market can ever become the "in" products with the youth group. Thus we need new brands designed to be particularly attractive to the young smoker, while ideally at the same time being appealing to all smokers.

Several things will go to make up any such new "youth" brands, the most important of which may be the image and quality--which are, of course, interrelated. The questions then are: What image? and what quality? Perhaps these questions may best be approached by consideration of factors influencing pre-smokers to try smoking, learn to smoke and become confirmed smokers.

Table I [see page 34] attempts to define some of the more important effects expected or derived from cigarette smoking by pre-smokers, "learning" smokers and confirmed smokers. If this incomplete, subjective, simplistic analysis is even approximately correct, there are sharp, perhaps exploitable, differences between pre-smokers, "learners" and confirmed smokers in terms of what they expect or derive from smoking. Let us examine these differences.

For the pre-smoker and "learner" the physical effects of smoking are largely unknown, unneeded, or actually quite unpleasant or awkward. The expected or derived psychological effects are largely responsible for influencing the pre-smoker to try smoking, and provide sufficient motivation during the "learning" period to keep the "learner" going, despite the physical unpleasantness and awkwardness of the period.

In contrast, once the "learning" period is over, the physical effects become of overriding importance and desirability to the confirmed smoker, and the psychological effects, except the tension-relieving effect, largely wane in importance or disappear.

The common thread binding the three groups together appears to be the fact that smoking of cigarettes offers and provides a desired mechanism for coping with the stresses of living, which may range from boredom to high tension and from fatigue to high arousal and hyperactivity. Once this mechanism has been experienced and used, physical and psychological habit patterns are firmly established and become self-perpetuating.

If the above analysis is approximately correct, then the basic theme for promoting any cigarette to any group should aim, directly or indirectly, at the desirability of using a given brand as a mechanism for coping with stress. Brands tailored for the beginning smoker should emphasize the desirable psychological effects of smoking, also suggesting the desirable physical effects to be expected later. Happily, then, it should be possible to aim a cigarette promotion at the beginning smoker, at the same time making it attractive to the confirmed smoker. The information and outline in Table I then may be used as a basis for arriving at some specifications for new "youth" brands and for

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determining how they should be promoted.

I. PHYSICAL EFFECTS

Having identified these as highly desirable to the confirmed smoker but largely unknown, unpleasant, awkward and/or undesirable to the pre-smoker or "learner," the effort here should be to effect a compromise to minimize the undesirable effects while retaining these which later become desirable.

A. Nicotine Effects - Nicotine should be delivered at about 1.0-1.3 mg./cigarette, the minimum for confirmed smokers. The rate of absorption of nicotine should be kept low by holding pH down, probably below 6.

B. Sensory Effects

1. Irritancy-Harshness - The beginning smoker and inhaler has a low tolerance for smoke irritation, hence the smoke should be as bland as possible.

2. Flavor - The flavor of tobacco smoke is initially foreign, and not pleasant. One cultivates a taste for smoke much as one learns to like olives or dry wines. Perhaps, as in the case of taste of water, there is no really "good" flavor, only degrees of "bad" flavor. Thus for the beginning smoker the cigarette smoke should have a moderate level of blended tobacco flavor, but should be as free as possible from strong, unpleasant flavors such as steamy flavor, etc. A "tar" delivery of 1.2-1.4 mg./cigarette should provide the desired flavor level.

3. Other Mouth Feel - The smoke should be "bland" with respect to astringency, hotness, dryness and the like. Again, the theory is that any mouth effect is new and different, hence should be as bland and free of obvious negatives as possible.

4. Visual - the package and cigarette should be pleasing to the eye, as will be discussed further below. The amount and density of exhaled smoke should be such as to be clearly visible and not thin or scanty. A tar level of 1.0-1.4 mg./cigarette should meet this requirement.

C. Manipulative Effects - Carrying, opening and using the package should be convenient. The cigarette should be as long as possible, probably 100 mm, to facilitate lighting. The rod should be reasonably firm, and a moderately soft, round filter tip should be used. The draft resistance prior to and during smoking should be as low as practical and should not exceed VANTAGE specifica-

TABLE I

EFFECTS EXPECTED OR DERIVED FROM CIGARETTE SMOKING

	PRE-SMOKER	LEARNER	SMOKER
I. PHYSICAL EFFECTS			
A. Nicotine Response	0	+	+++
B. Sensory Effects			
1. Irritancy-Harshness	0	–	–
2. Flavor	+	–	+
3. Other Mouth Feel–Dryness, Astringency	0	–	–
4. Visual–Pack, cigarette, and smoke attributes	0	+	++
C. Manipulative Effects–Handling, lighting, puffing, holding, ashing, extinguishing	–	–	++
II. PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS			
A. Group Identification–Participating, sharing conforming, etc.	+++	+++	0
B. Stress and Boredom Belief–Buys time, valid interruption, bridges awkward times and situations, something to do, etc.	+	++	+++
C. Self-Image Enhancement–Identification with valued persons, daring, sophistication, free to choose, adult, etc.	++	+++	–
D. Experimentation–Try something new, experiment, etc.	+++	+++	0

+= positive
0= none
–= negative

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tions. The product should require, thus, minimum effort and care to handle and use.

II. PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS

These are the expected or derived gratifications which influence a pre-smoker to try smoking and which sustain the beginning smoker during the largely physically awkward and unpleasant "learning to smoke" phase. These effects also largely determine which brand the smoker will experiment and learn with.

A. Group Identification - Pre-smokers learn to smoke to identify with and participate in shared experiences of a group of associates. If the majority of one's closest associates smoke cigarettes, then there is strong psychological pressure, particularly on the young person, to identify with the group, follow the crowd, and avoid being out of phase with the group's value system even though, paradoxically, the group value system may esteem individuality. This provides a large incentive to begin smoking. If this be true, then the same effect strongly influences the brand chosen, it likely being the popular, "in" brand used by one's close associates.

Thus a new brand aimed at the young smoker must somehow become the "in" brand and its promotion should emphasize togetherness, belonging and group acceptance, while at the same time emphasizing individuality and "doing ones own thing."

B. Stress and Tension Relief - The teens and early twenties are periods of intense psychological stress, restlessness, and boredom. Many socially awkward situations are encountered. The minute or two required to stop and light a cigarette, ask for a light, find an ash tray, and the like provide something to do during periods of awkwardness or boredom, and afford a little "time-out period" when confronting a stressful situation. Smoking also gives one something to do with the hands, eyes, etc. and something to talk about in a situation where otherwise one might likely have nothing to do or say.

This desirable attribute of smoking should be strongly emphasized in promoting a new youth brand.

C. Self-Image Enhancement - The fragile, developing self-image of the young person needs all of the support and enhancement it can get. Smoking may appear to enhance that self-image in a variety of ways. If one values, for example, an adventurous, sophisticated, adult image, smoking may enhance one's self-image. If one values certain characteristics in specific individuals or types and those persons or types smoke, then if one also smokes he is psychologically a little more like the valued image. This self-image enhancement effect has traditionally been a strong promotional theme for cigarette brands and should continue to be emphasized.

D. Experimentation - There is a strong drive in most people, particularly the young, to try new things and experiences. This drive no doubt leads many pre-smokers to experiment with smoking, simply because it is there and they want to know more about it. A new brand offering something novel and different is likely to attract experimenters, young and old, and if it offers an advantage it is likely to retain these users.

There is another psychological factor which did not readily fall into Table I, but which may be quite important. That category might be called "Anti-Establishment Attitudes." It may not enter into the decision to start smoking but may strongly influence the brand chosen. Today more than ever, young people tend to reject whatever is accepted by the "over-thirty" establishment, which includes their parents. If "Brand 30+" is the accepted "in" brand with the establishment, it is likely that many young smokers will almost automatically reject that brand and start with something else. They will more likely start with "Brand 20+" which is both the "in" thing with their closest age

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Memo
(continued)

group and the "out" thing with the "over-thirty" group. Probably in today's market, WINSTON is the "Brand 30+" and Marlboro is the "Brand 20+." Happily, the Marlboro will eventually age out of its "in" position with youth, as WINSTON appears to have already done. Now is the time to launch the next brand to become the "in" cigarettes with the next generation as Marlboro ages from "in" to, hopefully, "out and over-thirty" status, hence becomes something for youth to avoid.

A final psychological factor which also did not fall readily into Table I involves smoking-health attitudes. The smoking-health controversy does not appear important to the group because, psychologically, at eighteen, one is immortal. Further, if the desire to be daring is part of the motivation to start smoking, the alleged risk of smoking may actually make smoking attractive. Finally, if the "elder" establishment is preaching against smoking, the anti-establishment sentiment discussed above would cause the young to want to be defiant and smoke. Thus, a new brand aimed at the young group should not in any way be promoted as a "health" brand, and perhaps should carry some implied risk. In this sense, the warning label on the package may be a plus.

Ideally, the name chosen should have a double meaning; that is, one desirable connotation in "straight" language and another in the jargon of youth. A current example may be KOOL, which reads on "cool" cat in youth jargon, and also literally connotes a refreshing physical sensation. Another way of approaching the name or image would be to choose one which evokes different but desirable responses from different age groups. Thus the Marlboro western theme suggests independence, clean air, open spaces, and freedom to the youth group, while at the same time suggesting the "good old days," hard work, white hats over black hats, and the like to the older generation. In passing, it is interesting to note that Marlboro is a distinguished, dignified British name, and there is a certain inconsistency in equating this image with the West.

A careful study of the current youth jargon, together with a review of currently used high school American history books and like sources for valued things might be a good start at finding a good brand name and image theme. This is obviously a task for marketing people, not research people.

Assuming that at some point marketing people will establish a name and image for a new youth brand, and assuming that the thoughts on product quality factors expressed above are approximately correct, then the Research and TPD should be able to provide the product needed. Most of the product specifications defined are achievable with present technology. Those which require new technology would appear to be (1) control of irritancy and related mouth-feel factors to produce a bland smoke, and (2) creation of some useful demonstrable novelty in filter, mouthpiece, package or other aspects of the product system.

Our Company needs to take advantage of the opportunity to market new youth brands of cigarettes. The thoughts expressed here may provide a preliminary agenda for discussions between Research, TFD, Marketing, and Management, aimed at more precisely defining what we could ultimately make and promote. It is hoped that such discussions will soon ensue. Meanwhile, it becomes appropriate for Research to seek ways to control smoke irritancy and to seek to create novel, useful cigarette systems.

Signed
Claude E. Teague, Jr.
February 2, 1973

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Why We Need a Religious Left

Liberals have a secret weapon in the moral power of religion. They've used it in the past. Why not now?

BY AMY WALDMAN

It was the Christian thing to do. That's what a series of letters to members of Congress from the Reverend Pat Robertson implied. Support Republican tax cuts for wealthy families, the letters said. Support the Republican version of welfare reform, which excluded provisions for child care, health care, and welfare-to-work assistance.

Among the letters' recipients was Representative Glenn Poshard, a fourth-term conservative Democrat from a poor rural district in Illinois. Poshard is a devout Southern Baptist, and he shares some Christian Coalition positions, particularly balancing the budget in seven years and scaling back Medicare. What this former church deacon couldn't figure out, though, was how a tax cut for the wealthy, and the extra cuts in Medicare and programs for the poor it would necessitate, was the Christian thing to do. "I had to ask myself honestly as a Christian, is that appropriate?" says Poshard. "Are [the tax cuts] something that Christ would recommend? I don't think he would."

So Poshard went to the House floor to speak. "With all due respect to the Christian Coalition," he asked, "where does it say in the Scriptures that the character of God is to give more to those who have and less to those who have not?... If there is one thing evident in the Scriptures, it is that God gives priority to the poor." He quoted Jesus Christ: "When I was thirsty you gave me drink, when I was hungry you fed me ... When you did it to the least of my brethren, you did it to me."

Poshard's speech was not, in and of itself, notable. For centuries, leaders have drawn on a religious tradition to champion the poor and downtrodden. In America today, however, Poshard's criticism was remarkable. As Republicans claim the halo of Christianity and religious virtue, liberal religious and political leaders have been slow to respond in kind, to show how the Judeo-Christian tradition cannot condone a conservative agenda that rewards the affluent at the expense of the disadvantaged, that takes money from plowshares to forge more swords, and that demands personal responsibility from the poor while excusing the well-off from their social responsibility. Most Americans, raised as Christians or Jews, know and accept the teachings Poshard spoke about. Yet it is the conservative right that has annexed the term "Christianity" in defense of the Republican agenda.

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(See "What's Un-Christian About the Christian Right," p. 44.)

From the religious left there have been only murmurs. "At the moment," says Tom Fox, the editor of the *National Catholic Reporter*, "the religious left is ... saying 'There's no one else here. No politicians are with us' ... There is virtually no voice in the mainstream today speaking about poverty or the marginalized." Jim Wallis, a Washington, D.C. pastor and author of *The Soul of Politics*, says the progressive religious community couldn't do a Christian Coalition-like voter guide even if it wanted to: "There aren't enough politicians we could support."

Many liberal politicians, meanwhile, complain that religious leaders are not providing the moral support to challenge GOP policies. "I just can't figure it out," says Representative Charles Rangel (D–NY). "I don't see a profile in courage among those who are supposed to speak for Jesus.... The cuts that are taking place aren't going to be restored in the next 10 or 20 years. But [liberal religious leaders] now are like deer frozen in the headlights of a car."

Religious leaders on the right, of course, have been anything but frozen. In the early seventies, a progressive Baptist minister named James Dunn wrote a book on how Christians could become more involved in politics. A few years later, he saw a picture of the Moral Majority's Jerry Falwell reading his book. "We succeeded too well," Dunn, now head of the Joint Baptist Committee on Public Affairs, says. "The wrong people read the book."

Indeed, the succeeding years have seen the demise of the Moral Majority and a stronger phoenix rise from its ashes in the form of the Christian Coalition. In only six years, Robertson and his executive director Ralph Reed have built an organizational machine reminiscent of Mao Tse Tung that aims to build enough clout to swing any election in the nation. With a $24 million annual budget and four million activists, the Coalition is well on its way.

As conservatives have successfully used religion to make political inroads, liberals have become increasingly antagonistic to mixing religion and politics. The discomfort with which some liberal intellectuals treat religion stems partly from an understandable concern for the religious provisions of the First Amendment, a concern that some liberals have extended to argue that churches shouldn't speak out on political issues at all. Many liberals also associate religion with intolerance and Elmer Gantry-like evangelism. And some on the left hold the church, particularly the Catholic church, responsible for fueling the pro-life movement. The result, as Stephen Carter points out in his forthcoming book *Integrity*, is that everyone knows the Pope is firmly against abortion, and a good many liberals resent him for it.

What they don't know, Carter notes, or what they choose to ignore, is his opposition to the death penalty or his repudiation of consumerism or his commitment to helping the poor. Pope John Paul II's message on his recent visit seemed downright radical in America's political climate. "Is present-day America becoming less sensitive, less caring toward the poor, the weak, the stranger, and the needy?" he demanded. "It must not!" Similarly, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops recently spoke out harshly against Republican policies—partly because they fear cuts in programs for the poor will encourage abortion, but also, as one Cardinal said, because "the weakest members of society should not bear the greatest burdens" in the effort to balance the budget.

So when secular minds raised on rigid political dichotomies dismiss the Catholic church because of its position on abortion, they throw away the chance to build a coalition on many issues where they have much in common. Abortion is perhaps the religious right's most powerful mobilizing issue; yet the people it attracts aren't the pro-Gingrich caricatures liberals imagine. Stephen Carter notes surveys showing that Christian evangelicals and Roman Catholics are more likely to support liberal economic policies than their supposedly more liberal mainstream or Protestant counterparts and that pro-life advocates are more likely than pro-choice advocates to strongly support government assistance for the unemployed.

That liberals and the Pope have more in common on socioeconomic issues than you might think isn't just coincidence. Many of liberalism's core values—whether help for the downtrodden or support for peace—derive from the Judeo-Christian tradition. Liberals who disdain religion are inadvertently acting like embarrassed adolescents who shun their own parents. For whether or not you believe Jesus was resurrected, he still offers a model for a life of radical social justice. Whether

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you believe God or men wrote the Bible, it too speaks to how we live.

But the left, or what remains of it, seems to have forgotten how powerful a force religion is. "It's moral support," says Rangel. "Just putting on a collar and coming down here makes a difference. It means a lot when a rabbi thanks you at a synagogue, or a bishop thanks a congressman for supporting a program for the poor." Religious leaders have the right to criticize or support the government, and political leaders who use their faith as a guide to their actions have a right to speak out about those values. They also have an obligation.

God on their Side

The proof of the power is in the history: Dating back at least back to the Quaker abolitionists in the 1830s, American liberals have a much longer —and until the early seventies a much stronger— tradition of bringing religion's moral suasion to politics and public policy.

During the Depression, for example, Dorothy Day used the Catholic church's social teachings, the "preferential option for the poor," to speak out on behalf of the poor, workers, and the unemployed through her *Catholic Worker* newspaper, which inspired a movement of the same name. But it was in the 1960s, with the civil rights movement, that religion's power to transform American society was most obvious. From Catholic bishops who excommunicated segregationists to the rise of civil rights leaders from the black, primarily Baptist churches, the movement was always as much spiritual as it was political.

By rendering faith into action and religious fervor into a passion for social justice, Martin Luther King, Jr. convinced Southern blacks that God (and at least some churches) were on their side, which gave them the strength to protest peaceably. "With this faith," he said in his "I Have a Dream" speech, "we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day."

King also used a biblically based, moral appeal to reach whites; he invoked the inclusive image of "God's children" and explained to white church leaders in his "Letter from Birmingham City Jail" that, "A just law is a man-made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God."

Religious values partially undergirded the anti-war movement as well. Protestant theologians were outspoken in their criticism of the war, and many of the anti-war movement's leaders, such as the Protestant chaplain William Sloane Coffin, Jr. and the Jesuit Berrigan brothers—came out of the churches. Again, the ethos—that the war was morally wrong, even if it could be strategically justified—penetrated secular society.

Many of the major liberal economic programs are, in one sense, the use of government as an instrument to fulfill God's will as established in the Old and New Testaments—to lift up the poor, to use an affluent country's resources to help those in need, to shore up the weakest links in the chain that creates a community. That was the spirit of the New Deal; Eleanor Roosevelt once called her husband a "very simple Christian." For Lyndon Johnson, as for John and Robert Kennedy, the War on Poverty and the Great Society weren't just practical exercises in governing; they were about fulfilling the obligations incumbent on religious faith.

The merging of Robert Kennedy's faith and his politics took him to the ghetto, amidst the rural poor, and as far afield as South Africa, where he said that the heart of Western freedom and democracy "is the belief that the individual man, the child of God, is the touchstone of value, and all society, groups, the state exist for his benefit." Robert Kennedy touched the religious conscience, but he also appealed to secular liberals who were drawn to his moral conviction and spiritual vision—a conviction and vision rooted in his faith.

In the eighties, the religious left had a brief resurgence as Protestant and Catholic churches passionately opposed U.S. aid to the Nicaraguan Contras and the El Salvadoran government. The churches mobilized thousands of members who weren't traditionally liberal or politicized. Opposing communism, they argued, could never justify killing innocent people or funding terrorism. Churches raised millions of dollars and provided sanctuary to refugees, and religious activists testified and protested on Capitol Hill. Many members of Congress attributed their opposition to funding the Contras to the influence of the religious community.

The campaign for a just Central American policy was important and successful, but it begs a question: Why didn't the churches fire up the same passion about issues confronting Americans at

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home? Why weren't they sitting in congressional offices protesting conditions in Appalachia and South Central Los Angeles? "[Domestic policy] doesn't hold the glamour of Central America," says Sister Maureen Fieldler of the Quixote Center, a Catholic social action organization in Maryland. "You can't go on a delegation to the inner city." In the same way, the religious left often championed the cause of, say, people with AIDS while ignoring the larger cause of universal health care. The religious left, much like the left at large, sometimes went for radical chic over radical change.

By the time a campaign for universal health care did take hold—during the debate over the Clinton plan in 1993 and 1994—the religious left had long since receded as a major presence on domestic policy issues. After *Roe v. Wade* in 1973, many liberals, led by the feminist movement, turned against the church because of its position on abortion. For the religious right, *Roe v. Wade* sparked political mobilization and fired its ascendency. Later in the decade, Jimmy Carter, a born-again Christian, not only disappointed many liberals but embarrassed them with talk of spiritual "malaise" and of praying for God's guidance when making big decisions. His presidency hastened liberals' flight from religion.

Unfortunately the religious left began to fade just when the economy began to slide; over the years, as the poor got poorer, the religious left proved impotent. While the health-care crisis worsened, for example, religious leaders were first quiet and when they finally acted, ineffective. The religious community lobbied heavily on behalf of universal access to health care; they were precisely the kind of fire-in-their-bellies allies liberals needed. But health-care reform failed dramatically—partly because the other side mobilized greater resources and grassroots opposition (with Christian Coalition help), partly because many religious leaders *didn't* speak out, and partly because political leaders didn't call on those who did. The coalition splintered over churches' vociferous opposition to any plan that would fund abortion and secular liberals equally adamant attachment to one that would.

Of late, left-leaning religious leaders and devout politicians have spoken too rarely, and too softly, on draconian policies and unsettling economic trends, on violence in the inner city, on the relation between personal responsibility and structural change. Louis Farrakhan motivated hundreds of thousands of black men to march on Washington—what better proof of the need to link spirituality with politics?—but the churches to which those men belong have done little to mobilize protest against GOP policies that could further erode their already weakened communities. "They're basking in a 30-year-old story of Martin Luther King and the black church," says Reverend Eugene Rivers, who heads the Ten Point Coalition in Boston, which aims to inspire local black churches to greater involvement in their communities. Why, in an era when their voices are so crucial, has the religious left become so quiet?

"People should be out in the streets," says Pastor John Steinbruck of Luther Place Church in Washington, D.C. But he's not—for good reason. Upstairs he has three dorms of homeless women and recovering drug addicts. In his basement a group of volunteers supervise activities for the mentally ill. A complex of low-income housing—constructed entirely from money raised by Steinbruck and the church—is being built across the street. "I am consumed with binding up

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wounds, caring for people," Steinbruck says with frustration. "How much time do I have left [for political activism]? How much energy?"

That's one explanation for the religious left's absence from politics—many of its members are too busy doing social service work to put time into grassroots campaigns. Another is that just as evangelicals during the fifties and sixties saw politics as something dirty, some in mainline religious congregations now fear that political involvement will devolve into a grasp for power, a scramble for money, and thus contradict their most fundamental religious values.

Many religious communities and religious leaders also are unsure whether their role is to provide comfort and celebration for life as it is, or to challenge their followers to change the status quo. That's why liberation theology, a populist interpretation of Scripture that inspired Catholic clergy throughout Latin America and other developing regions to challenge oppressive regimes, was necessary in the first place. Ministers or rabbis who speak out on behalf of the poor risk alienating middle class congregations unless they can provide enough moral fervor to inspire a change of heart. "Most church people are not persuaded or educated as to the social implications of the gospel, because most preachers don't preach it," says Collins Kilburn, the North Carolina director of the National Council of Churches. "I'm 61, and I've been working all my life to make the social gospel more relevant," he says. "I have not been successful."

Other members of mainstream congregations are suspicious that ministers who preach the social gospel are smuggling secular liberal ideology into the church. Those ministers need to show that they are speaking straight from the Old and New Testaments, that liberalism took its cues from those ancient texts and beliefs.

Finally, there's the attitude of secular liberals, who sometimes seem to have assimilated Marx's contention that "religion is the opiate of the masses." "Religion," says Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, the lieutenant government of Maryland and, like her father, Robert Kennedy, a devout Roman Catholic, "provides a moral sense of right and wrong, but liberals feel uncomfortable with that. ... They try to be value-neutral."

Consider Hillary Clinton's 1993 speech on the "politics of meaning," in which she proclaimed, "We need a new ethos of responsibility and caring. We need a new definition of civil society which answers the unanswerable questions posed by both the market forces and the governmental ones, as to how we can have a society that fills us up again and makes us feel that we are part of something bigger than ourselves."

A crowd of 14,000 Texans gave her a standing ovation; the pundits gave her hell. Sure, some of her speech was corny, but most of the criticism sprang from a mocking mistrust of a liberal who dared to speak about spiritual matters. The irony, as the magazine *Christian Century* noted, was that "for the protectors of secularism, she sounded too spiritual," while "for the large public, which does relate to religious language, she sounded too secular." Hillary Clinton was raised a Methodist, and much of her political outlook has origins in her denomination's commitment to improving the lives of the less fortunate. Since that speech and the torrent of criticism that followed, she has played down the role her faith plays in driving her politics.

Her husband has had more success—among the best speeches of his presidency was the impassioned address he gave in 1993 to 5,000 black pastors in Memphis, where he talked about a "great crisis of the spirit ... we have to reach deep inside to the values, the spirit, the soul, and the truth of human nature." President Clinton has faith, but he has called on it too rarely—especially this year—to make a moral case for his policies.

Getting Religion

Secular liberals need to understand: Americans have spiritual as well as material needs. In opting for moral relativism, liberals have alienated those who believe in morality. As the Democrats are finding, a platform framed in technocratic, utilitarian terms—repair the inner cities to reduce crime, reduce welfare to cut taxes, support affirmative action to retain the black vote—does not resonate in the American conscience.

The left at least is trying to mount a challenge to the Christian Coalition. A Progressive Evangelical Network was established recently to show that not all evangelicals are with the rightwing. (Since the early 1970s, in fact, there has been a small band of evangelicals working for traditionally liberal causes.) In May, more than 100 Christian leaders is-

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sued the "Cry for Renewal," a powerful statement challenging the values of the religious right and its claim to speak for all people of faith. An Interfaith Alliance of Christian and Jewish leaders has begun to distribute "mainstream" voter guides. These campaigns are important, but inadequate. They oppose the religious right, but are not *for* anything.

For liberals, religion offers values as well as spirituality. In a society where we often judge each other on material success—adulating the best ballplayers, the richest entrepreneur, the best-looking model—the Bible provides a wholly different set of criteria: whether you live, as the Jesuits put it, as a "man or woman for others." For believers, the idea that God will judge them, not on who they are but *how they act,* is a powerful incentive to live differently. Even for nonbelievers, it continuously needles us to strive to be better than we are.

In the eighties, the religious left sometimes went for radical chic over radical change.

How we treat the least among us—the least important, the least appealing, the least wanted—is the most important test in the Judeo-Christian tradition. On his path to sainthood, God demanded that Saint Francis of Assisi embrace and kiss a leper, whom Francis considered the lowest of all humans. From St. Francis, God exacted compassion harshly: "Half of his putrescent nose had fallen away," Nikos Kazantzakis writes in *God's Pauper*, an imaginative retelling of St. Francis's life. "His hands were without fingers—just stumps; and his lips were an oozing wound. Throwing himself upon the leper, Francis embraced him, then lowered his head and kissed him upon the lips." How many among us would similarly embrace an AIDS patient or a homeless woman who hasn't bathed in weeks? The story of St. Francis moves us, perhaps, just a little closer.

In an age of unchallenged capitalism, an awakened religious left's greatest duty may be to provide an alternative set of economic values. In the 1980s, for example, when the Catholic church did speak out on economic issues, it offered one of the most profound challenges to conservative economic doctrine and its celebration of profit and wealth. In the week after Ronald Reagan's landslide reelection in 1984, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops released the first draft of their pastoral letter on the economy. It was a chastening statement, a moving, beautifully written guide to Catholics "trying to live their faith in the marketplace." The bishops wrote to provide guidance for members of their own church: "No one may claim the name Christian and be comfortable in the face of hunger, hopelessness, insecurity, and the injustice found in this country and around the world." But the bishops also wrote to help shape the public debate on the economy. Every economic decision and institution, they insisted, "must be judged in light of whether it protects or undermines the dignity of the human person."

The challenge for religion in the United States is not to provide a knee-jerk defense for government or liberal policies that haven't worked. Indeed, it can help wean us from looking to government and look more toward ourselves. Since leaving the presidency, Jimmy Carter has brokered peace, founded a center to work for democracy, and lent his name and hands to Habitat for Humanity. His example of a private citizen acting on his faith's call to action may be a more lasting legacy than his presidency.

Religious values can, however, play a fundamental role in determining what government provides, and what it expects. Probably the strongest challenge to President Clinton to veto the welfare bill—which, at press time, it seemed he would—came from Marian Wright Edelman in a stinging *Washington Post* op-ed addressed to the President. She appealed to Clinton's "moral leadership," referring to God's mandate "to protect the poor and the weak and the young." "Do you think," she asked, "the Old Testament prophets Isaiah, Micah and Amos—or Jesus Christ—would support such policies?"

When Congress first spoke of dismantling the federal guarantee of health care for the poor, imagine what would have happened if Christian and Jewish leaders had come together to remind one of the most religious nations in the industrialized world of Deuteronomy: "For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land," or Luke's message that "When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind." Imagine that they preached these messages

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to their congregations. Even though your own health care might be covered, they could have said, faith means offering compassion as well as receiving comfort—it means action as well as belief. If the religious community stopped aid to the Contras in the eighties, it could have stopped the GOP from sacrificing health care for the poor to pay for a tax cut and a few more B-2s.

The power of religion, as anyone who has heard King's speeches can testify, is that it touches not reason, but emotion—which is exactly why liberalism, with its Enlightenment roots, is so skeptical of it. Emotion has power—real, raw power—to change hearts and minds in a way that facts do not. Which is exactly why liberals should use it, not fear it. That's what Bill Clinton does when he taps into something higher than the Democratic Leadership Council; it's what Jesse Jackson, political maneuverings and missteps aside, does time and again.

There may be no single leader in the church able to claim King's mantle, no Bobby Kennedy in politics today, but there are individuals who can provide models for what the religious left should do. Take Dr. J. Philip Wogaman, the minister at Foundry Methodist Church in Washington, D.C. "For this church to ignore the issues would be a dereliction of duty," Wogaman says, particularly because the members of his congregation include policymakers like Bill and Hillary Clinton.

During the health-care debate, for example, Wogaman preached for universal access. In the Gospel of John, Wogaman pointed out, Jesus stood before 5,000 people with a few loaves of bread and some fish: "Jesus didn't say some of you will be fed," Wogaman said. "Jesus said *all* of you will be fed." To a debate framed by politics and profits, Wogaman brought a third consideration: right and wrong. "Grave moral issues can be present even though the language can be very technical," he said, noting fast-food chains' complaint that the obligation to provide employee health care would raise the price of pizzas and burgers. That suggested, he said, that his Big Mac was being subsidized by the health insecurity of the worker he bought it from—that it is more important that burgers be a few cents cheaper than it is for the young mother who works there to see a doctor. He invoked the words of Psalm 13: "Have they no knowledge, all the evildoers, who eat up my people as they eat bread?"

A religious left is not just vital—it's possible. There are millions of people of faith wanting their better halves appealed to, willing to act, waiting for a vehicle to do so. There are thousands of people acting already. Some small religious lobbying groups—Catholic, Methodist, Lutheran, and more—have been working feverishly to protect federal programs for the disadvantaged. This year, for the first time, the theologically Conservative Jewish community lobbied against legislation that would hurt immigrants and the poor, and rabbis were asked to speak out about the disadvantaged during holiday services. "Our tradition has an ethical dimension," says Rabbi Charles Feinberg, who heads the Rabbinical Assembly's Social Action Committee. "They're not just rituals so the Jewish people can survive for the sake of surviving; it's so that we can survive for a higher purpose."

Beyond the Beltway, some black churches are continuing the struggle for social change. In Detroit, for example, at the Baptist Hartford Memorial Baptist Church, throughout his 26-year tenure as pastor, Dr. Charles Adams has exhorted his congregation to scrutinize elected officials and call them to task, to write legislators letters invoking the prophets. The church registers voters, and Dr. Adams makes sure his 8,000 congregants, welfare recipients or college professors, vote: "We preach that you cannot live in this society and not exercise your democratic responsibility."

Then there is Representative Glenn Poshard, exercising not only his democratic but also his religious responsibility. He says many of his colleagues, particularly Southern Democrats, thank him privately for speaking out, but they are scared to do so themselves because the religious right has so much power in their districts. With their silence, that power only grows.

"This is not a question of fighting the Christian Coalition," Poshard says. "It's one Christian taking issue with another on what our faith means.... I came out of the same background as the people running the Christian Coalition.... When something like a report card goes out so that Christian people—even in my own church—call and say, 'We don't understand why you can't be more Christian in the way you vote,' it hurts me. I have to explain what the budget means, and tell them, 'You think it was un-Christian of me to vote that way. I think it was the most Christian thing to do'." □

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What's Un-Christian About the Christian Right

They're still trying to put that camel through the needle's eye

BY JONATHAN ROWE

There is something very strange about the Christian Coalition's "Contract With the American Family," released with much fanfare in May. The document says a lot about the usual conservative agenda—tax credits as rewards for doing right, abolishing the Department of Education, policing the Internet, and so on. But there's little of the thing you'd most expect to find. There's not one word that Jesus himself actually said.

In fact, the Contract does not start out from Scripture, but from election returns and polling data. "The message of the election was clear," the introduction says, boasting that the provisions of the Contract "enjoy support from 60 to 90 percent of the American people." This form of justification is not auspicious. I remember only one reference to a poll in the New Testament. It was when Pontius Pilate asked the people whether he should have mercy on Jesus. "Crucify him," they said, and so Pilate did. An agenda that purports to represent the "Christian" view, but is assembled with the public-opinion wizardry of focus groups and polls, should raise eyebrows from the start.

Christianity of the kind Jesus taught is more about going against the flow than with it, more about telling people what they need to hear, rather than what they want. A minister by the name of Henry Drummond amplified this point in a sermon called "The Greatest Thing in the World." Based on a passage in one of Paul's letters (I Corinthians 13), it is a pointed commentary on the essential Christian character. When it came to faith, eloquence, commitment, and sacrifice, Drummond pointed out, Paul was the exemplar. He had suffered stonings and deprivations, and had taken enormous risks. He spoke "with the tongues of men and angels"; he had the "faith to move mountains." Yet Paul thought he had still fallen far short of the mark. The traits that had come easiest to him, he came to see, were the least important. The most important thing, he said, is "agape," simple compassion for his fellow beings, which for him was more difficult.

Christianity is, first of all, about making radical demands upon oneself. If the Christian Right in America today were a movement informed by the

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radical and tough-minded Christianity of the Scriptures—the kind that puts neighbor ahead of self and "seeketh not her own"—it would be a cleansing wind. It would promote an atmosphere of responsibility and mutual obligation rather than entitlement and right. It would challenge Americans—rich as well as poor—to whine less and do more. It would express concern about the family by taking on not just government, but also the corporations that are laying off breadwinners and moving their jobs abroad. It would not flinch from bearing witness against the rule of lucre in Washington, and the polemical licentiousness and character assassination that poisons the atmosphere of public life.

At the grassroots level, some of the people drawn to the Christian Right have shown evidence of this spirit. But the higher up you go, the further away you get. At the top, with the so-called Christian Coalition, it's more of the same old Washington trip—take away the name, and you wouldn't see much difference from any other right-wing group—except the sanctimony that the name itself provides. We are left with a Christian Right that, in important respects, has a ways to go before it is worthy of that name.

I am not a theologian nor am I a Scripture scholar. But I do try to give some heed to these matters, and, in fact, I actually agree with the Christian Right on many things. I think the public schools should teach the basics and leave such things as sex education for the home. I think that corporations like Time Warner ought to be accountable for the crap they spew. And I agree that the best giving is voluntary and individual rather than coercive and bureaucratic. If Christianity is about anything, it is about putting yourself on the line.

And that is precisely where the Christian Right disappoints. To be sure, Christianity is not primarily a social doctrine. It demands, first and foremost, radical *inner* change. But a central part of this change—of saving yourself—is the need to get *out* of yourself, to care passionately for those in need. "Give," says Jesus, "and it shall be given unto you."

This spirit is something which has not been in great evidence within the Christian Coalition today. The Coalition's position on the Republican's family tax credit is a small but telling example. The proposal would give a $500-per-child tax credit to every family. When Democrats, and even some Republicans, suggested that the well-to-do are not in urgent need in this regard, and that the available funds should be focused on the more needy—generously defined as families earning less than, say, $95,000—the Coalition screamed murder. They actually wanted the credit extended to families with incomes as high as $200,000. Yes, the tax laws are hardly the final test, but they do reflect larger values.

The Coalition's stance (or, rather, it's silence) is even more bizarre on Republican efforts to cut the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). The EITC was begun by the Reagan Administration to help lift from poverty those who work honestly for a living. If there is anyone the Christian Coalition should be championing, it's these people. "The federal government, through the tax code, has punished familes for working, saving, and for staying together," their Contract says. But when it comes time to save a tax provision that actually helps working families do these things, the Coalition is missing from the battle.

One could ask similar questions about medical care reform and a host of other issues. But the more basic matter is the willingness to bear the cross personally, to do the difficult, needful things. Commendably, the Coalition talks about voluntary service; at the local level, members no doubt do their part. But the national focus on bigger tax breaks for charitable contributions—do Christians really need a new bonus from the IRS in order to give?—rather than on service itself, is not exactly inspiring.

Nor is the selective condemnation of sin—the way they indulge the sins favored by certain conservative Republican constituencies. The Coalition is a tiger on lust, but it is strangely docile on its counterpart: greed. Jesus made no such distinction. He whipped the money changers from the Temple, condemned the charging of interest, and admonished the rich man to sell what he had and give the proceeds to the poor. "It is easier for a

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camel to go through the eye of a needle," said Jesus, "than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." Yet America's top executives now make 140 times what their average worker does, up from 40 times in 1972—quite a bit of baggage to carry through the Kingdom's gate. I also suspect the early Christians might have had some concerns about the Thai women being held in slave-like conditions so that American consumers can buy bargain T-shirts. The Christian Coalition certainly hasn't shown any concern.

And while it is so eager to blame the government for strains on the family, somehow it doesn't count when corporations cut pay and health benefits for those same families. Nor does the siege of commercial culture, which fills every nook and cranny of waking life with beguilements to hedonistic self-indulgence. To blame the decline of our culture on 1960s liberals and the National Endowment for the Arts, and to virtually ignore corporate commercial culture (except for a few convenient targets like Democrat-leaning Time Warner) invites the suspicion that moral principle is not their only consideration.

Could campaign contributions to favored allies be one of those considerations? "Gifts and bribes make even wise men blind to the truth and prevent them from being honest in their criticism," says Sirach in the Apocrypha. You'd think that the Coalition might have something to say about a politician like Senator Phil Gramm, who spends two hours a day on the phone raising money for himself when he could be raising money for people in need. Yet conspicuously absent from the Contract with the American Family is any reference to campaign reform or the corrupting influence of money in politics. The Christian Coalition becomes soft indeed before the one sin—the love of money—which Jesus said was the root of all the rest.

Is the Coalition concerned primarily with spiritual values, or with building an old-fashioned power base? It was hard not to ask that question after their exertion on behalf of the Contract With America. Ralph Reed, the Coalition's executive director, called it "the single largest lobby effort in our history." Certainly Newt Gingrich's Contract represents a conservative political agenda. But is it a markedly Christian one?

A typical Contract provision is the so-called "Takings Bill," which would require compensation for property owners when government restricts the use of that property. Since Reed is not running a secular property-rights association, the question should be what Scripture says. Jesus was not the world's most ardent property-rights man. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth," he said in his most quoted (and most ignored) sermon. Henry Drummond added this thought:

> "[T]o give up the things that are obviously yours—that you have earned perhaps by years of labor and sacrifice of trouble or money—to give up those things which are your own, that is the hard thing. And yet the most obvious lesson of the Gospel is that there is no happiness in having and getting, only in giving."

No, this doesn't mean that we should all line up at the Interior Department to hand in our deeds, or that we should support every last land-use regulation. But it does suggest something about the spirit and temper with which a truly Christian Coalition would approach such an issue. Would it not seek to balance a concern for property rights with a concern for neighbors and the general well-being? Should not the Christian show some grace regarding reasonable restrictions that work to the benefit of all?

Moreover, it's fine to say there should be less regulation, but there is another side of the equation: Namely, that the deregulated have a responsibility to do right voluntarily, on their own. That corporations, say, should stop poisoning the air we breathe and the water we drink. If welfare recipients have a responsibility to work—and they do—then the major corporations that benefit so handsomely from America's marketplace, and from a government monetary policy which deliberately maintains unemployment, have a corresponding responsibility to stop cutting wages and moving entry-level jobs abroad.

The failure to raise such issues suggests an unwillingness to expect anything of anyone, except the poor (and others who do not vote Republican). To his credit, Newt Gingrich does raise them from time to time. That is his good side. But this vital concern gets lost in a sea of other issues that have a somewhat tenuous connection to Scriptural concerns.

An example is the demand, one of the ten planks of the Contract with the American Family, to abolish public broadcasting and the National

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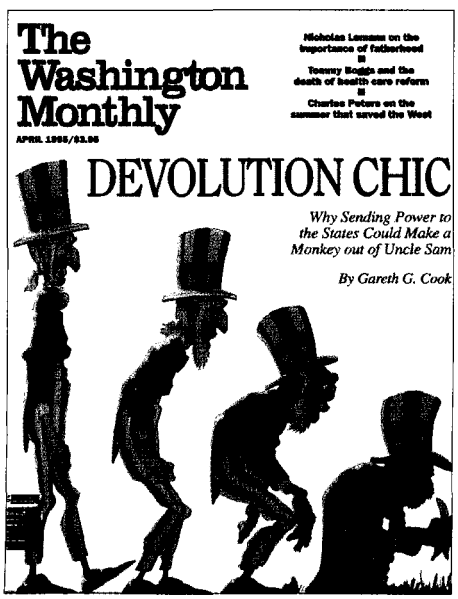

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Endowment for the Arts. In the first place, the distinction between PBS and NBC derives much more from secular political philosophy than from the kinds of issues with which Jesus was concerned. Whether a broadcast entity is owned by a nuclear power corporation such as General Electric, or by a corporation established by the legislature, would seem a secondary matter. The first question for the Christian, one would think, is what these entities project into the family living room.

By this standard, it is hard to understand why public broadcasting—public radio in particular—would be first on the hit list of those who say they are concerned with this country's moral atmosphere. I would invite Ralph Reed to spend a week watching any of the commercial networks, and a week watching PBS, and then explain why PBS should be singled out for abolition as a matter of Christian principle. Would not Fox be at least as worthy a target? I would also invite Reed to listen to Rush Limbaugh for a week, and then Scott Simon of NPR's Weekend Edition. Does Limbaugh really embody the qualities Paul talked about in I Corinthians 13 (patience, kindness, modesty, etc.) better than Simon?

While the little guys get fed to the legislative lions, the Christian Coalition has been up in the skyboxes with the right-wing lobbyists, cheering the lions on.

If the goal is to rid the airwaves of sex, violence, and intemperance, then the crusade against public broadcasting calls to mind what Jesus said about straining gnats and swallowing camels. As for the National Endowment for the Arts—personally I think it should fund WPA-type civic art and projects in ghetto schools, and let the Mapplethorpes fend for themselves. But do we really want to turn the funding of the nation's arts over to the very same corporations that use prurient sexual imagery to sell everything from cereal to shampoo, as the Christian Coalition suggests? How about using the NEA to fund projects in the poorest neighborhoods to paint over the pervasive cigarette and malt liquor billboards with positive messages? (There's a dose of old-fashioned politics in the Contract, the kind Tip O'Neil and Dan Rostenkowski would have appreciated: While the Coalition wants to cut off funds for PBS, the NEA, legal services for the poor and others, they want churches to be eligible for those same noxious federal funds.)

On the scale of sheer moral cowardice, however, it is hard to beat the so-called "Istook Amendment," which the Christian Coalition warmly embraced. Right-wing House members turned Istook into a jihad upon the groups that oppose their agenda. Basically, the Amendment would prohibit any organization that receives federal grants from seeking to influence legislation in any way, even if it uses other funds to do so. Applied consistently across the board, Istook might not be a bad idea. If defense contractors, for example, could no longer flood Congress with lobbyists on behalf of budget-busting weapons systems, it could be a definite advance for the republic. The same goes for tobacco and sugar growers, timber and mining companies, and others who benefit financially from federal policies and largess.

The trouble is, that's not what Rep. Istook, a Republican lawyer from Oklahoma, and his cohorts had in mind. Their idea of cleaning up Washington didn't include defense contractors or most others who make money and give large sums of it to Congressional campaigns. Instead, with enthusiastic Christian Coalition support, they focused on nonprofit groups for the ban on lobbying and the expression of views on legislation —even though they are already prohibited from using government funds to lobby. In the version the Christian Coalition supported, defense contractors could continue to besiege Congress for B-2 bombers which the Pentagon doesn't even want. But the YMCA that receives federal money for after-school programs for troubled teens would have to watch what it says.

Now, if you are simply a conservative Republican who thinks big business interests should run the country, that's one thing. But if you are Pat Robertson, who founded the Christian Coalition, it is quite another. Robertson has said of Istook "this may be the most important piece of legislation in this session." More important than crime, and drugs, and cigarette marketing aimed at kids? While the little guys get fed to the legislative li-

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ons, the Christian Coalition has been up in the sky boxes with the right-wing lobbyists, cheering the lions on.

Talking Like Newt

The worst sins are those of attitude. Indulgences of the flesh make no pretense at being other than what they are. Those caught up in them cannot hold them forth as virtue before the world. But sins of attitude can have a deeply corrupting effect, precisely because they often announce themselves as good.

Jesus told the story of the publican and the Pharisee who go to pray. The Pharisee says, "God, that I thank thee that I am not as other men." The publican, by contrast, says "God be merciful to me as a sinner."

"I tell you," Jesus said, "this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

It is hard to read that passage and not think of the public displays of the Christian Right and its political entourage. These people have difficulty pronouncing on any subject without demonizing the opponents they consider themselves to be better than. If you missed the Republican convention of 1992, you can take in the venomous speeches on the floor of our House of Representatives on almost any given day. Ask yourself if those suggest the qualities that we associate with Christian character? Or do they remind you more of Saul on the road to Damascus, before the new light dawned and he became Paul, seething with the righteousness of his mission, "breathing out threatenings and slaughters."

I am not excusing the Democrats here. I'm talking about anyone who wears the title "Christian" as a lapel pin, and therefore announces the standard to which he or she wishes to be held. Newt Gingrich has even distributed a list of words he recommends using when demonizing the Democrats—such as "sick," "pathetic," and "intolerant." "Language," he advises, "is the key to control." Paul, by contrast, said "overcome evil with good." Hubert Humphrey once dealt thusly with a colleague who had been untruthful to him: He went to the Senate floor and praised the Senator for other reasons. Instead of toxifying the situation, he elevated it.

Jesus talked primarily about radical inner change—what is somewhat misleadingly translated as "repentance" ("metanoia" in the original Greek). He said we need to get beyond the small-"s" self, and all the downward inclinations it harbors. This has implications for politics and social action—but it speaks most directly to how we conduct ourselves *in* politics, or any other realm.

People will always disagree, and none more so than religionists. But where religion becomes an all-purpose political banner it feeds precisely the sense of self-righteousness and self-love Jesus continually warned religious people against. (It was, in fact, the main thing he warned religious people against.) Hatred, and even violence, are almost always the result. Examples come readily to mind. Lebanon. Bosnia. Iran. The religious extremist who cut down Yitzhak Rabin. Exceptions are harder to recall.

With the holy season upon us, then, I propose a simple exercise. Put a copy of I Corinthians 13 by your radio or television. Rate the politicians—Christian Right and otherwise—according to how they meet Paul's standard. Do they suffereth long? Are they kind? Or do they vaunt themselves? Do they behave in a seemly manner? Or do they get provoked easily, think evil of others and rejoice in iniquity?

Put the politicians to Paul's test—something the Christian Coalition is strangely reluctant to do. And then commend the deserving. They are there, and they don't hear from us enough. As for the rest, don't wait for them to commission a poll. Write a short letter: Tell them, respectfully, that we all expect better. □

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How Cuomo Shows What's Wrong With the Democrats

The party needs more of Cuomo's liberal idealism. But it also needs something he's missing: a sense of where the liberal dogma is wrong

BY MATTHEW MILLER

Reason to Believe
Mario Cuomo, *Simon & Schuster, $21*

Call me a sucker for moral fervor and stinging rhetoric, but I'll admit it: Reading the first half of Mario Cuomo's new book, *Reason to Believe*, I wished he were running for president. Cuomo is an unapologetic, full-throated liberal who insists that government can improve society. Among other unfashionable beliefs, Cuomo says there's no reason to be defensive about a safety net that "relieve[s] the palpable suffering of human beings who are taking a beating," that Americans are bound together to such an extent that our obligations can't end at our doorstep, and that, current exile aside, being a Democrat matters because the party believes life is about more "than waging the war for maximum personal liberty."

Cuomo's book can't help but evoke the void in American politics: What prominent elected Democrat is making such moral appeals now? Republicans are stripping away minimal guarantees for the poor while leaving untouched the windfall entitlements that benefit the well-off. Plus tax cuts. In response, Democrats can only demonize constructive (though imperfect) proposals on Medicare. Who, besides the Pope and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, is raising a whisper of outrage about the new attack on the poor? Certainly not Bill Clinton.

This is the problem, though. Just as the former New York governor reminds us where Democrats have lost their voice, when it comes to solutions, Cuomo comes up empty—showing us exactly why the Democrats are in a crisis.

The first half of *Reason to Believe* is a passionate and convincing polemic against the "New Harshness" that Cuomo says characterizes the GOP's ascendancy. The Contract With America, he writes, was "designed by distilling the bitterest juices from the people's anger, bottling them as legislation, and then offering it all back as a magic elixir." Cuomo concedes that Republicans have earned their turn at the plate thanks to Democratic complacency and hubris, but he argues that their plan "offers us catharsis but not a cure." Beneath the GOP's trickle-down redux, welfare and immigrant bashing, and anti-regulatory zeal, Cuomo detects a disturbing "new mythology that insists the strongest among us are sufficient unto themselves and the rest of us aren't worth the bother."

Cuomo predictably has a field day cataloguing GOP hypocrisies and deceits. Bob Dole wants Hollywood to offer our children more wholesome fare, then slashes the Public Broadcasting System, the only source of quality programming for underprivileged kids who need it most. Churches and nonprofits are supposed to pick up the slack as aid to the poor is scaled back, while the GOP cuts the funding on which these institutions rely to carry out their work. Calling it "federalism," Cuomo argues, is merely an excuse to cut programs for the needy; the same so-called federalists don't hesitate to preempt state laws that get in the way of limit-

Matthew Miller is economics editor for The New Republic.

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ing product liability for GOP business pals.

Cuomo relishes the attack, and it's fun to watch. He says government-hater Newt, who's always seeking "the Tarzan vote," ought to practice what he preaches: "If his house ever catches fire, he shouldn't dial 911 or look for a public fire hydrant; he should contact an entrepreneur interested in selling water for profit." Phil Gramm, a virtual lifer on government payrolls, provokes my favorite Cuomo outburst when he insists that government programs have "corrupted our values, diminished our virtues." Replies the last sassy Democrat: "When you give a disadvantaged child an enriched preschool program, you're corrupting the child's values? What value—illiteracy? I suppose if he were a real American, he could teach himself to read. When you provide food stamps to a mother trying to feed her family, you're diminishing her virtue? The virtue of bravely watching her children go hungry because she couldn't afford to feed them?"

While most Democrats keep their heads down or play me-too on cutting government down to size, Cuomo has the guts to say "nonsense." Government regulations protect us from buildings that collapse, toys that maim, food that sickens, and employers who exploit. Other programs help Americans get through life's traumas—disability or disease, sudden job loss, crippling old age. Cuomo admits many programs have outlived their usefulness or get defended without reason. But the GOP's desire to toss the welfare state aside because it hasn't solved all our problems, he says, is like arguing it's high time we scrapped the Catholic Church; it has had 2000 years, after all, and sin is still with us.

While these barbs generally hit the mark, Cuomo can be unfair or go overboard. He assails GOP cuts in federal job training programs, for example, when both parties know these efforts have failed and are crying out for revamping. He comically exaggerates the Commerce Department's role in our economic life in order to damn the GOP for trying to kill it. When describing Republican attempts to block modernization of meat and poultry inspections, he practically accuses them of wanting to poison us.

Worse, when he moves from dissecting Republican failings to his own set of answers for the country, Cuomo is disappointing. Few would dispute the two overarching issues he sees facing us—economic challenge and cultural corrosion. The question is what to do about it. Some of Cuomo's solutions, such as reinventing the public schools, ring hollow, even with his specific suggestions of more school time, smaller classes, better teachers, and upgraded facilities. Many other worthy ideas—increased spending on research and development and infrastructure, deficit reduction, welfare and campaign finance reform, or trying enterprise zones—read like press releases from blue-ribbon panels.

There's nothing wrong with Cuomo's mainstream ideas per se; the only way to fund them, however, while also weaning ourselves from our debt binge, is to proffer some hard budget choices. That's the litmus test for turning rhetoric into renewal. Yet here, as with just about every Democrat these days save Bob Kerrey, Cuomo fails to see what's needed, or he simply punts. Cuomo plays down the need to balance the budget anytime soon, saying seven years is too fast. He begs all the big questions on health-care costs, saying only that we need to cut "unconscionable administrative costs," reduce "excessive" investments in medical technology, and make "greater use of" managed care. Most depressing of all, the pragmatic Cuomo lets his fellow pols off the hook for refusing to make unpopular choices on entitlements; they "put prudence before valor," he explains, without passing judgment. Instead, he urges young people to speak up, since they stand to lose the most. Then he adds: "[I]f a bipartisan commission is the only way, by all means let's do it."

Another day, another tough call. But since Cuomo won't step up, his numbers don't add up, and his program amounts to mere words. Maybe that's why, as I finished the book, Cuomo's speechifying came less to dazzle and more to annoy me. Free enterprise is the "rich orchard" that sustains us; the Cold War ended for many "at a cliff called unemployment"; business can "stick to the knitting of the cozy old-fashioned sweater of profitability"; our last, best hope is that people have the patience "to play another inning in the magnificent, ramshackle ballpark of our democracy." Maybe it sounds better on the audio version. In the end, when it comes to what's really needed to turn the tide, for all of Mario's inspiring eloquence, even this best of Democrats leaves us with the sound of silence. □

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Bobby Kennedy's War on the Mob

A long overdue inside look at RFK's crackdown on organized crime

BY ANTHONY R. DOLAN

Perfect Villains, Imperfect Heroes: Robert F. Kennedy's War Against Organized Crime
Ronald Goldfarb, *Random House, $25*

In 1960, the arrest of George Ratterman in a Newport, Kentucky bordello made national news. A reform candidate for sheriff in a town notorious for its corruption, Ratterman claimed the arrest was a set-up. Still in his twenties and a lawyer in the Kennedy Justice Department's organized crime section, Ronald Goldfarb became the lead prosecutor in the government case against those accused of drugging and framing Ratterman—an effort that spun out to include a more general effort to clean up Newport.

Towards the end of his work in the town, an elderly woman stopped the federal attorney in the street: "You're the prosecutor of the Ratterman case, Mr. Goldfarb, aren't you?" she asked. "Well, I want you to know, Mr. Goldfarb, that I've lived in Campbell County for 75 years and we good people here go to bed each night thanking God for sending us a good Christian boy like you to clean things up."

Goldfarb's experience in Newport is two chapters in this important, engrossing, chronicle of the Justice Department's crackdown on organized crime in the early 1960s. But in addition to a brief history of Robert Kennedy's war on the mob, the legal issues it raised, and the obstacles overcome, the book offers something else: Not infrequently, à la the Newport lady, we get a hoot. I laughed out loud when the Kennedy prosecutors get a mafioso for violating the Migratory Bird Act. (With few federal racketeering laws, they had to be imaginative.) And Robert Kennedy's prodigious wit is everywhere—what he said when journalist Charlie Bartlett told him not to become Attorney General; how he teased his assistant Henry Petersen; the times he complained about the number of Democrats his department was indicting.

In his memorable RFK biography, Arthur Schlesinger shows a breathless awe at Kennedy's humor. "He made jokes," he writes, with a sense of wonder not unlike a Ukrainian peasant seeing his first tractor. Clearly, Arthur did not grow up in an Irish household. Bobby did though and a gift for mirth was essential to his make-up—something Goldfarb, who grew up in a Jewish household (almost as good), knows and uses to his advantage.

Goldfarb also gives readers something unexpected—a portrait of the younger Kennedy that even those well-versed in the RFK literature will find intriguing. As good an account as possible is here of the family back-and-forth over Bobby's appointment to Justice; so too are glimpses into the interior of the relationship between brother and president. And we get into meetings in the attorney general's office for a look at the problems—the bureaucratic infighting, the timid officials—that went with launching the first serious effort to undo the American mafia.

But if glimpses into the Kennedy wit and will are there, so is the flipside. There are the personal premonitions of tragedy and a vivid, moving description of the afternoon at Hickory Hill when the news came in from Dallas. Most of all, there are vivid, moving anecdotes that explain the affection, indeed, the love those who worked for

Anthony R. Dolan, former chief speechwriter for President Reagan, won a Pulitzer Prize for his coverage of organized crime and political corruption.

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Kennedy had for him. Bessie Davis's story is one example. A long time Justice clerical worker, she had gone unnoticed by five of Kennedy's predecessors. When he did her one of his kindnesses, she wrote him a note: "This is what sets you apart from other men; you have a heart and you use it."

There is also an emotional meeting between Kennedy and Gary, Indiana Mayor George Cacheris, a loyal supporter and the administration's ambassador-designee to Greece whom the Kennedy prosecutors were about to ruin with an indictment. And there is Bobby's backchannel efforts to console Congressman Eugene Keough as Justice indicts his brother.

The Kennedy portrait is captivating, even though it is incidental to Goldfarb's larger purposes. Describing himself as a New Yorker moving to Alexandria, Virginia where it is hard to get a bagel or watch the Yankees, Goldfarb recounts engagingly his accidental hiring into the youth brigade at Justice and observes "somebody was always handing out cigars, arriving at work red-eyed after a long vigil in a maternity ward." It's a good analogy for the Kennedy team's fertility in other areas, especially indicting and prosecuting gangsters.

The personal stuff, though, is a narrative vehicle, a way of getting at the real business of the book. Sometimes obscured by the attention given other Kennedy-era episodes like the civil rights struggle or the missile crisis, Robert Kennedy's attack on organized crime, which, next to slavery may well have been America's worst social evil, at last gets the attention it deserves. In seeing the extraordinary power of the mob and its immunity from justice, Robert Kennedy was quite right in saying flatly, "Either we are going to be successful or they are going to have the country." We can be grateful Goldfarb has recorded the names and deeds of those like Walter Sheridan, Bob Blakey, Clark Mollenhoff and many others who joined Kennedy in this struggle against our own evil empire. And much of it, from San Giancana's doings to why Hollywood didn't make a movie of Kennedy's exposé of labor racketeering, *The Enemy Within*, also seems new.

Some complaints, relatively minor, should be noted. Goldfarb engages in the annoying, all-too-common practice of reconstructing quotes from decades ago. The treatment of J. Edgar Hoover, that great liberal bugaboo, is also too simple, too dismissive; one gets tired of hearing that Hoover and his G-men weren't doing much about the mob, then reading a few pages later about the exploits of FBI agents in the fifties and sixties. Finally, Goldfarb talks almost regrettably about Robert Kennedy as Cold Warrior, not realizing RFK's anti-communist and anti-mafia inclinations had the same origins: a moral vision that permitted him to recognize institutionalized evil when he saw it and a generous anger that drove him to seek its destruction.

Curiously, the Republican Ronald Reagan was the next leader to share these concerns. Working in the White House, I had the privilege of participating in this effort. Prior to that, as a reporter in Stamford, Connecticut, I had investigated organized crime and municipal corruption and was startled by the federal government's indifference to the web of bribery and mob influence in six city departments. One police force, besides running guns to Northern Ireland, also had a commander who took $1,800 a week in mob payoffs and a deputy commander who ran the largest drug ring in Southern Connecticut out of headquarters. The point was that Stamford's story was not at all unusual; too many American cities and towns had seen such traumas.

Reagan launched "the most intensive onslaught against organized crime since Bobby Kennedy had taken on the mob in the early 60s," author John Davis noted in a recent history of the Gambino crime family. Davis was not the only one to make the connection. On entering office, Reagan moved quickly to hold a Rose Garden ceremony—something the Carter administration had declined to do—for the formal presentation of a special Congressional Gold Medal to Robert Kennedy's family. In his remarks that day, Reagan emphasized RFK's war on organized crime. In later speeches, Reagan repeated his call to finish the work begun by Robert Kennedy and others.

For some Kennedy loyalists, of course, it may be a source of irony or even annoyance that those who could hardly be called his political heirs or supporters carried on a struggle he was singularly identified with. Yet for those of us who were part of that effort, who had read once as students *The Enemy Within* and been inspired, and remembered, it only seemed a tribute to a man and legacy that went beyond easy political boundaries or partisan categories. □

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The Impoverished Debate on Poverty

Herbert Gans's book would take liberals in the wrong direction in the welfare debate

BY DANTE RAMOS

The War Against the Poor
Herbert J. Gans, *Basic Books, $22*

When Phil Gramm visited Louisiana this past July, he stopped off in Metairie, a well-appointed white-flight suburb of New Orleans, to woo local Republicans and plug a tough welfare-reform bill. He drew cheers with his now-familiar soundbite: Welfare recipients should get out of the wagon and help the rest of us pull.

For most journalists and public policy analysts, speeches like Gramm's are just political boilerplate. Yet Herbert J. Gans imputes much darker motives to politicians who attack welfare dependency. In *The War Against the Poor*, Gans interprets such attacks as part of a centuries-long conspiracy to demonize the poor and keep them from improving their situation.

Gans, an eminent Columbia University sociologist, has chosen his title and central metaphor to tweak the War on Poverty. He also has chosen it to claim a patch of moral high ground in the current welfare-reform debate. After all, a politician who would actively plot against poor people seems much more disreputable than one who merely argues that public aid erodes work incentives. And, in truth, Gans's style of attack on welfare critics has been a standard device in social policy debates for more than three decades. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, reviled as a racist in the late 1960s for his report on the black family, was the first victim.

Hysteria is a terrible way to defend welfare programs—especially when other defenses would be more sensible and more effective. Take Gramm's stump speech, for example. He depends implicitly on at least two specious propositions: All poor families are able to help pull the wagon, and welfare is a bigger drain on the budget than corporate subsidies, the mortgage-interest tax deduction, freeloading cattle ranchers and so on. Unless these issues are engaged, defenders of anti-poverty programs will be powerless in the face of treacly anecdotes about Gramm's once-destitute momma, who always told young Phil that welfare checks never got anyone out of poverty. You can hear the voters now: "Gramm's not evil. He's just folksy!"

Gans does make some strong points. Most employers are *not* clamoring for new workers. Welfare recipients *are* less morally suspect than defense contractors who grossly overbill the government. And some critics of welfare—Gramm comes to mind—who insist they want to *help* the poor are very clearly disingenuous.

It's also quite obvious that the biggest difference between poor people and rich people is money—not some weird disdain for social norms. As Gans writes, "There are no middle class muggers." Welfare critics are often right for emphasizing the role values play in perpetuating poverty. But they too seldom acknowledge the simple truth that it's easier to devote attention to education and child rearing if you have some financial security.

Unfortunately, Gans is much less convincing on the central thesis of his book—that conservative critics of welfare are waging a "war." If people are plotting a campaign against the poor, Gans needs to document the battles, body counts and strategy meetings. Instead, he talks only about name-calling. Labels such as "welfare dependent," "substance abusers," and "the homeless," he says, char-

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acterize the poor as indifferent to the values of society at large. But would Gans prefer "crack fiend" or "bum"? Often the terms he vilifies are efforts to describe certain behaviors in a way that's value-neutral, or even kind.

The label that galls Gans the most is "the underclass," a term that exploded in popularity during the late eighties. Gans calls the term vague, and he's right. For some, it means all low-income individuals. Others use the term for poor people who show certain characteristics and behavior: long-term welfare receipt and poor work history, for example. But to Gans, this is all just criticism of behavior, society's way of calling the poor undeserving—and therefore a weapon of war.

Gans portrays anything and everything predicated upon "the underclass" as dangerous—"even a thoughtful underclass policy." This will come as a shock to Henry Cisneros, Robert Reich, Donna Shalala, and other Clinton Administration officials who have tried to give poor people housing, education, health assistance, and substance-abuse counseling in one package. The idea behind this "coordinated approach to poverty" is that certain people suffer from a complex of related problems that result from factors such as poverty, neglectful parents, and lack of education.

"Because 'underclass' is a code word that places some of the poor *under* society and implies that they are not or should not be *in* society, users of the term can therefore favor excluding them from the rest of society without saying so," Gans writes. Read that last sentence again. Gans says that recognizing that there are poor people is the same as wanting to keep them poor and excluded. He elides the difference between a preacher who implores congregants to help the disadvantaged and, say, a hopelessly callous businessman.

"Above all," Gans writes, "everyone has to realize that insisting on the harmfulness of divergent behavior is a way of asserting the cultural and political power of one's own values." This is true, and unwed high school dropouts should have every legal right to father or mother as many children as they want. But *The War Against the Poor* is not about legal rights. It is about social welfare policy, which involves the use of scarce tax dollars. In this context it is unfair—and politically obtuse—to scold taxpayers for decrying pregnancy rates among teenagers who can't afford to feed their own children.

The strange thing is that Gans doesn't take advantage of opportunities to score easy points off Newt Gingrich and his ideological progenitors. He could begin with the Republican attack on the Earned Income Tax Credit, a budget cut that very nearly crosses the line separating garden-variety political cynicism from unmitigated evil. Gans should have dealt at length with Ronald Reagan's infamous "welfare queen" speeches—perhaps using evidence from high-level strategy meetings. Perhaps he would have found that some politicians *do* begrudge poor people a warm meal.

Gans's book is well-intentioned, certainly. But he misses the point. The tragedy is not that politicians and voters are waging war on the poor, but that they usually don't think about the poor at all. Gingrichism is political genius: It buys off the vast middle class with tax cuts by cutting government services that benefit poor people, not corporate subsidies that benefit the well-off. Because the people who vote for this brand of conservatism live in the vast insulated swaths of suburbia, there is no downside, at least not for the time being. Residents of Metairie—the wealthy community where Gramm pitched welfare reform—do not wake up at 4:30 a.m. to the sound of burglars spiriting compact-disc players from their bedrooms. And most suburbanites probably think they're doing right by the poor: As Gans reports, polls show that many or most non-poor people still support some form of public assistance.

It does feel odd to criticize Gans's book at a time when the cuts moving through Congress would cost the lowest fifth of American families more than $1,500 in aid. Republicans are systematically eliminating the federal guarantee to care for this country's neediest people. And taxes are being cut for millionaires and raised for many working stiffs. There is no doubt that the poor will suffer from these cuts, particularly children. Meanwhile, necessary anti-poverty programs—such as the neo-Rooseveltian jobs project most forcefully proposed by Mickey Kaus—aren't even on the table.

The seriousness of this moment in history is all the more reason why criticism from the left needs to be passionate, but also reasoned and intelligent. Instead of criticizing Americans for recognizing the presence of the poor, how about criticizing policy that worsens inequality? To rekindle a faith in liberalism, we need to appeal to people's hearts—and their heads. □

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The *Monthly*'s Holiday Book List

Books reviewed favorably in our pages in 1995

1939: The Lost World of the Fair, by David Gelernter.

A Civil Action, by Jonathan Harr.

A Good Life, by Ben Bradlee.

The Ashes of Waco: An Investigation, by Dick J. Reavis.

Back Fire: The CIA's Secret War in Laos and Its Link to the Vietnam War, by Roger Warner.

Buffett: The Making of An American Capitalist, by Roger Lowenstein.

Common Cents: A Retiring Six-Term Congressman Reveals How Congress Really Works—And What We Must Do To Fix It, by Rep. Timothy J. Penny and Major Garrett.

Conflict and Compromise: How Congress Makes the Law, by Ronald D. Elving.

The Confidence Game, by Steven Soloman.

The Death of Common Sense, by Philip K. Howard.

The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War, by Alan Brinkley.

First in His Class: A Biography of Bill Clinton, by David Maraniss.

Friends In High Places, by Douglas Frantz and David McKean.

The Generals' War: The Inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf, by Michael R. Gordon and Lt. Gen. Bernard E. Trainor.

The Haunted Land: Facing Europe's Ghosts After Communism, by Tina Rosenberg.

In Confidence, by Anatoly Dobrynin.

Inside the Reinvention Machine: Appraising Governmental Reform, edited by Donald F. Kettl and John J. Dilulio, Jr.

It's All the Rage: Crime and Culture, by Wendy Kaminer.

Jihad v. McWorld, by Benjamin Barber.

Joe Alsop's Cold War: A Study of Journalistic Influence and Intrigue, by Edwin M. Yoder.

The Luck Business: The Devastating Consequences and Broken Promises of America's Gambling Explosion, by Robert Goodman.

Marketing Madness: A Survival Guide For a Consumer Society, by Michael F. Jacobson and Laurie Ann Mazur.

My American Journey, by Colin Powell with Joseph E. Persico.

The NEA and AFT: Teacher Unions in Power and Politics, by Charlene Haar, Myron Lieberman and Leo Troy.

The Nightingale's Song, by Robert Timberg.

The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of the New Conservativism, and the Transformation of American Politics, by Dan T. Carter.

Prodigal Soldiers: How the Generation of Officers Born of Vietnam Revolutionized the American Style of War, by James Kitfield.

Race and Culture, by Thomas Sowell.

Radical Surgery, by Joseph Califano.

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Risky Business: An Insider's Account of the Disaster at Lloyd's of London, by Martin Mayer and Elizabeth Luessenhop.

Sarajevo Daily: A City and its Newspaper Under Seige, by Tom Gjelten.

The Southern Front: History and Politics in the Cultural War, by Eugene D. Genovese.

Temptations of a Superpower, by Ronald Steel.

Trust, by Francis Fukuyama.

Understanding Health Care Reform, by Theodore R. Marmor.

The Vandals' Crown, by Gregory J. Millman.

Virtually Normal: An Argument About Homosexuality, by Andrew Sullivan.

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Political Booknotes

Autopsy on an Empire: The American Ambassador's Account of the Collapse of the Soviet Union
Jack F. Matlock
Random House, $35
By Bill Keller

You start this book, by the American ambassador to Moscow during the Gorbachev years, thinking, "Uh, oh." There is the 16-page photo gallery of the author in Zelig mode, posed awkwardly with Soviet luminaries. In early moments, the bellows of self-importance wheeze distractingly. "While I considered reform of the Soviet system essential, I recognized that it would be a mistake to state this aim openly," he muses, contemplating America's role in the demolition of communism. You wonder at first if this book is going to become "How Gorbachev and I Brought Down the Evil Empire."

Fortunately, it does not. What it becomes is diplomatic history of the highest order—enriched by regular access to the main players, wise and fair in its insights, crisply written, wonderfully free of ideological fiddles and bureaucratic score-settling. His judgments of the characters—including the operatic heroes, Gorbachev and Yeltsin—are subtle, sympathetic, and almost unerring.

Jack Matlock may have been the most qualified man America ever sent to Moscow as ambassador. He had translated Russian poetry and taught Russian history, had read Marx (and understood him!), and had served three tours in the Moscow embassy during the dark days. As the chief Soviet hand on the National Security Council, he had played the role of Gorbachev in Reagan's summit rehearsals.

In a cruel irony, he arrived in Moscow shortly after a security scandal in which Marine guards had taken a KGB floozy on a nighttime tour of the embassy's secrets. Just as Soviet society was laying itself bare to outside inspection, Matlock was obliged to batten down Fortress America, curtailing the social contacts of all but the most enterprising of his embassy staff.

What this book most sorely lacks is the texture of the society in which these changes are taking place. But that is probably expecting too much of a diplomat. This is an insider's account, by a keenly observant insider, of the men who initiated and lost control of the effort to modernize Communism. It is primarily the story of Gorbachev and Yeltsin, two leaders who often have been caricatured but rarely captured in their full, tragic complexity. Matlock's analytical portraits, though they lack the novelistic power of, say, David Remnick's incomparable *Lenin's Tomb*, are very close to the mark: Gorbachev, the brilliant, isolated, and gullible reformer who relished the adulation of the West but could not inspire the loyalty even of the second-rate figures around him, and who, to his eternal credit, refused to use force to crush the rebellions he inadvertently ignited; and Yeltsin, the driven, courageous, impulsive political genius who dared to go where Gorbachev did not. Matlock is as reliable a guide as you can find to these men and the constraining context within which they made history.

Matlock is excellent, too, on the telling small points of political culture. Without mistaking Moscow for Washington, he recognizes that in both realms political and bureaucratic imperatives sometimes defeat national interests. He points out, for example, that Gorbachev gravely misjudged the volcanic discontent of Eastern Europe, in part because the embassies on which he relied for his intelligence had been turned over as rewards or cushy exiles for loyal party hacks, "the equivalent of political appointees in U.S. diplomacy," as Matlock, the professional, points out.

His analysis of the Washington culture that employed him is just as sharp. Though he writes with charitable restraint, he leaves no doubt as to his frustration with President Bush, the self-proclaimed foreign policy president, who repeatedly missed opportunities to influence events in the Soviet Union. Upon ascending to the presidency, Bush purged most of the seasoned Soviet hands. Then he equivocated dangerously over a policy because he feared (as Reagan did not) that the Republican right wing would castigate him as a wimp. Finally, his infatuation with Gorbachev blinded him to the nuances of the new Soviet politics. Matlock's implicit message—that Bush should have listened more to his ambassador—may be self-serving, but it is also right. *Bill Keller,* The New York Times *foreign editor, won a Pulitzer prize for his reporting from the former Soviet Union.*

Hard Landing
Thomas Petzinger, Jr.
Times Books, $29.50
By Rick Newman

"The state of our airline industry is a national embarrassment," said embittered Pan Am chairman Tom Plaskett in 1991, one day after his company had flown its last flight. Pan Am was but one of several major airlines, and numerous smaller ones, that failed in the competitive free-for-all following

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the 1978 Airline Deregulation Act. Thomas Petzinger, Jr., a reporter for *The Wall Street Journal* who once worked as a baggage handler, tells the story of the competitive war that left Plaskett so bitter and so many companies bankrupt.

Hard Landing is a vivid and detailed version of what is to some a familiar story, tracing the origins of the defining characteristics of modern air travel: spartan service, polarized pricing, addictive frequent flier programs, and "hubs." Unlike many dry analyses of airline deregulation, this book is foremost a tale, fashioned around the ambitions, schemes, and failures of the mercurial men who have dominated aviation for the last 30 years. Many legendary promotional tactics reflected their inclinations: stewardesses selected for their comeliness and dressed in hot pants, and "booze wars" intended to woo passengers with free liquor before airlines were allowed to compete on price.

The hero, such as there is one, is Herb Kelleher, the fun-loving founder of the enigmatic and consistently profitable Southwest Airlines. The primary villain is Frank Lorenzo, who led Continental into two bankruptcies and Eastern into disintegration. The fierce chairman of American Airlines, Robert Crandall, is a constant Machiavellian presence. The real story, then, is how some of the brightest (and most devious) minds in business exploited their new freedom to set any prices, serve any markets, and make any deals they wanted.

The most important and widely recognized result of deregulation has been, by almost every measure, lower airfares. A more controversial result has been pricing discrimination that metes out the lowest fares to the most flexible passengers. Petzinger relates how such advance-purchase discounts (or late-purchase penalties, depending on your perspective) were devised when American's Robert Crandall decided he needed a way to match the low fares advertised by other airlines, without having to offer every seat on the plane at that price. Another post-deregulation Crandall innovation—the frequent-flier program—has become such a powerful purchasing incentive that many travelers routinely go hours out of their way just to get miles on their preferred airline.

Petzinger zeroes in on one of the less public but vital battlegrounds in the war for passengers—the computer reservation system. American, which owns the Sabre reservation system that many travel agents use to book passengers, routinely listed its own flights ahead of other companies. That gave American a big booking edge, since travel agents often assumed the first flight was the fastest. There were other ghosts in the machine: At one point, discount fares offered by Continental did not appear on Sabre in 49 markets where American competed. The government eventually had to step in.

Unfortunately, some of deregulation's serious downsides get less attention. Petzinger says virtually nothing about the hundreds of small towns that lost jet service when the airlines were allowed to pull out of unprofitable markets. Many of those places are now served by turboprop flights that are adequate but often less comfortable and convenient than jets. Some towns have lost air service altogether. The competitive pressures fostered by deregulation also led to sharp pay cuts for mechanics and flight attendants, as well as for pilots at the lower end of the seniority scale, some of whom today earn as little as $7 or $8 an hour.

Petzinger also closes the book on deregulation too early. By 1995, he argues, a "final consolidation phase" had established a "delicate equilibrium" among the airlines. But recent merger talks could produce more consolidation and upheaval. And the current surge of low-cost startups like Valujet, Reno Air, and numerous lesser-knowns augurs a period of competitive brawls like those prompted by the likes of PeoplExpress over a decade ago. "The show is far from over," said Tom Plaskett as he bemoaned deregulation's fallout in 1991. That's probably still the case.

Rick Newman is an associate editor at U.S. News & World Report.

Chicago

Richard A. Posner

Aging and Old Age

"Richard Posner is the Holmes of our day, and the social and political issues associated with aging are among our most urgent questions of national policy. This book is yet another dazzling testament to the interdisciplinary range of Posner's interests." —Jeffrey Rosen, *The New Republic*

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The Mind's Fate: A Psychiatrist Looks at His Profession

Robert Coles

Little, Brown, & Co., $24.95

By Fitzhugh Mullan

In the winter of 1967, medical students at the University of Chicago, frustrated

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by their staid, conventional education, decided to create a curriculum of their own. They would be graduating into a medical and political world that was racked by the civil rights movement, the anti-war movement, and student protests on campuses across the country, and so the technical offerings of their medical curriculum seemed very narrow indeed. Even as they studied clinical medicine, Martin Luther King, Jr. was marching into segregated Chicago communities and the bombastic 1968 Democratic convention was soon to take place. Their school was not far from the front lines of America's social battleground. The students initiated service projects at community organizations around Chicago, sent some of their number South to work in the voter registration and school integration campaigns and, more to the point, invited a series of speakers to come to the university to talk to them about the tough problems facing medicine and the country. At the top of the list was Dr. Robert Coles, a young Harvard psychiatrist who addressed the students on "Psychiatry and Society."

That talk, the early writings and life experiences that led to it, and Coles's work since have an extraordinary consistency of theme and purpose. Life is important, Coles argues, but it is often troubled politically and personally. Both as an articulate observer and a participant clinician, a psychiatrist has something to offer in making these circumstances better. Psychiatry for Coles is neither an instrument of narrow practice nor a license for psychopharmacology. Rather it is a vehicle for listening, learning, and interpreting, for playing back and reporting on the dilemmas, confrontations, and generosities that make up personal and communal life. Art, particularly literature, informs and enriches his definition of his work and his writing. He draws much more heavily on George Eliot and William Carlos Williams than he does on Louis Pasteur or William Osler.

The Mind's Fate: A Psychiatrist Looks at His Profession is an expanded and updated version of the volume of the same name that was published in 1975. A collection of his essays written over the years for a variety of publications, ranging from *The New Republic* to *The Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychopharmacology*, the book suggests the breadth of Coles's work. There are reviews, commentaries, and an occasional lecture that provide a wonderful stroll through the life and mind of a powerful thinker and quintessential moralist who wrestles incessantly with social inconsistencies and unfairness. His tone is relentlessly civil and never strident or hyperbolic—an extraordinary feat for one writing about issues as charged as racism, poverty, religion, spirituality, and competing schools of psychiatric thought.

He began writing as a young psychiatrist who was influenced early on by William Carlos Williams (who helped persuade him to go to medical school), Erik Erikson, and Anna Freud. A tour as an Air Force physician in Mississippi followed by psychiatric training in New Orleans in the early 1960s brought him into contact with the first stages of the civil rights movement and, particularly, the struggle of children living through the perils of radical social conflict. His journey carried him away from traditional psychiatric venues. "I left hospitals, clinics and the possibility of private practice because I wanted to see, firsthand, how children I might not otherwise get to know managed the particular stresses that poverty and racism generate. I left, also, because I was a little annoyed by the various rigidities and orthodoxies of a given profession. But I did not lose interest in the clinical side of psychiatry." In an epoch in which psychiatry has suffered growing public skepticism, he writes with unrepentant enthusiasm for its precious mission. "To be sought out, to be asked to attend such a cry (of a disturbed person), such a call from others, is no small honor and privilege, and ought to be regarded as such by us, even in this day of a medicine increasingly bureaucratized, commercialized."

His extensive, protean command of literature began at an early age. His father was a scientist who emigrated from Yorkshire, England and married a midwestern school teacher whose great loves were history and English literature. Dickens, Eliot, Tolstoy, Chekhov, and Dostoevsky were read and discussed at home, and the stories of those greats as well those of Coles's subjects all over the world provide the moral texture and energy for his commentaries. Time and again, Coles uses this subject matter to bring us back to the moralism and spiritualism in our lives.

The intersection between moral precepts and personal action characterized by his activity in the South in the early 1960s has emerged once again in Coles's later life. This perspective, of course, is well out-of-step with the self-satisfied, cyber-tech, markets-über-alles world painted these days by the likes of Newt Gingrich and Peter Drucker. To some, Coles's ideas will seem dated—throwbacks to the 1960s or the 1930s, to the Catholic Worker Movement or the Franciscan ideal. The revitalization of volunteerism and community service in the 1990s, however, springs from roots that Coles's writings have watered during many dry years. He recently published *The Call of Service*, in which he explores the idealism, the challenges, and rewards of a life dedicated to service. He has talked of the "lust" for service, the human need to connect with others in common, unselfish enterprise. Many young Americans today volunteer in formal national programs such as Teach For America, while many others work for community, school, or church projects. These commitments and the personal gift that each one represents are ventures presaged, framed, and occasionally inspired by the voice—the humble, probing, charismatic voice—of Robert Coles.

Fitzhugh Mullan, MD is a public health physician, the author of Plagues and Politics: The Story of the United States Public Health Service, *and a 1968 graduate of the University of Chicago Medical School.*

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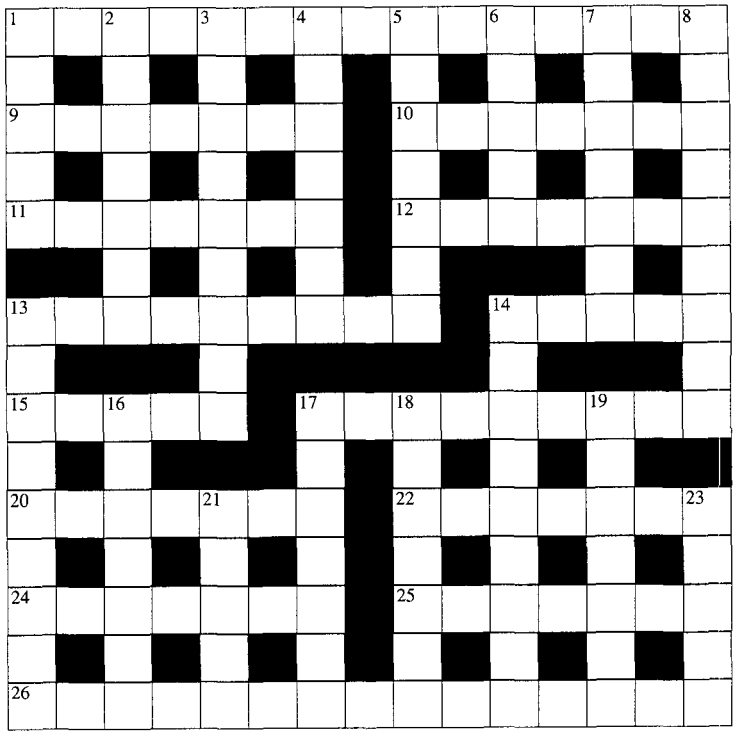
Political Puzzle

BY JOHN BARCLAY

The numbers indicate the number of letters and words—thus (2,3) means a two-letter word followed by a three-letter word. Groups of letters, such as USA, are treated as one word.



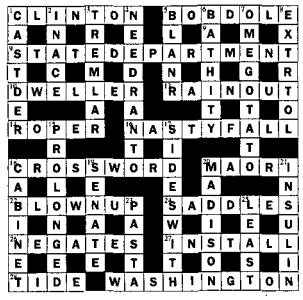
ACROSS

1. Upset mob cued tabloid's reorganization. (15)
9. Automobile parts turned red in swamps. (7)
10. Quick answers for certain vessels. (7)
11. One elderly car with new wheels? (7)
12. To inform judge without a .... (7)
13. ... miler's set treatment is without value. (9)
14. Master reversing prejudice about husband. (5)
15. Particular stars in Ivanov assembly. (5)
17. European tickling their ribs. (9)
20. Understood to finish outfit. (7)
22. Red grenade exploded. (7)
24. Settler constructed river crossing. (7)
25. Conceives new sea tide. (7)
26. Versions pattern iron site differently. (15)

DOWN

1. Put off completion of French railroad. (5)
2. Boxer role is one-star performance. (7)
3. Is too optimistic about rare votes. (9)
4. Surround and see big explosion before early start. (7)
5. Big dressers in Washington? (7)
6. Back off two tennis calls. (3,2)
7. Diminution in value ran this off. (7)
8. Take apart legislator of princess? (9)
13. Special pasta cooked in atomic tin. (9)
14. Police action set up site for the least liberal. (9)
16. Rough version, not live. (7)
17. Slander bears me off. (7)
18. I'm at GI's gathering for poet. (7)
19. He records Santa's vocal presentation? (7)
21. Change of heart for misanthrope. (5)
23. Administrations of deer around start of season. (5)

Answers to last month's puzzle:



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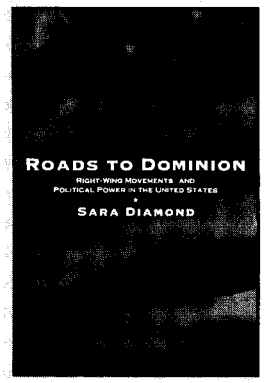

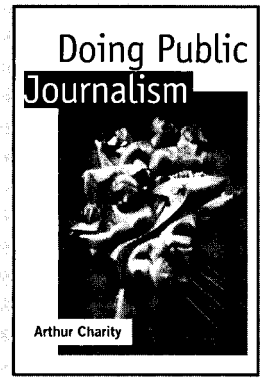

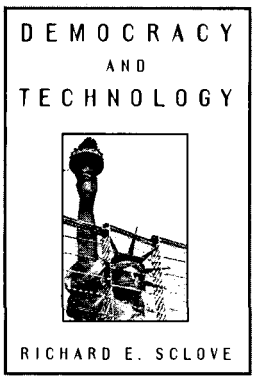

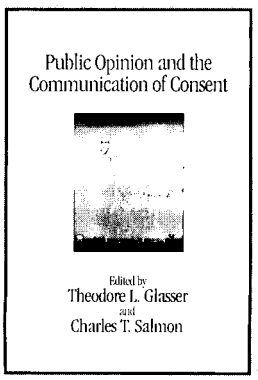

ISSUES OF THE TIMES

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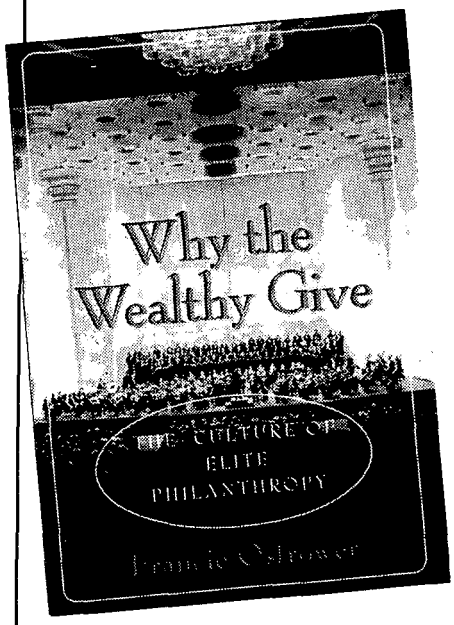
The Inside Story



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FRANCIE OSTROWER

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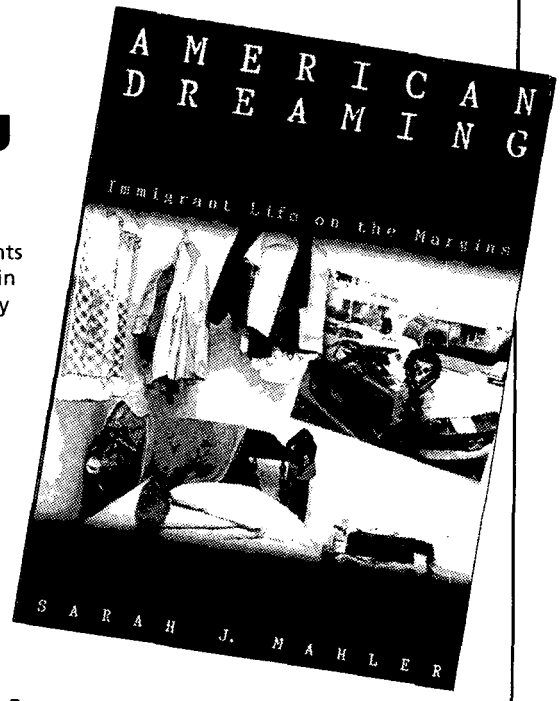

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